



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Danielle Barkhouse

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First Session

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Danielle Barkhouse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Lisa Lachance, Nolan Young

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

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

LISA LACHANCE: I beg leave to table a petition which reads as follows:

Whereas our government has committed in law to protecting 20 per cent of Nova Scotia lands and waters by 2030 but is continuing to permit logging of old forests of high conservation value on Crown land;

Therefore we the undersigned residents of Nova Scotia call upon the Premier to pause all harvesting and road building activities in forests over 80 years old on Crown land in Lunenburg County until such a time as 20 per cent of Nova Scotia's lands have been permanently protected.

There are a total of 706 signatures on the petition, and I have affixed my signature as well.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: I'd like to present a petition which reads as follows:

Whereas over one quarter of those who are homeless for the first time are over the age of 60; and

Whereas nearly 6,000 people are on the wait-list for public housing, with an average wait time of two years;

Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government ban evictions of seniors whose incomes would qualify them for public housing until there is a place in public housing for them to go.

This petition has been signed by a number of residents of Cambridge, Norwood and Seldon Streets in Halifax Chebucto, and I have signed it also.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

KENDRA COOMBES: I beg leave to table a petition with the operative clause reading:

We, the undersigned residents of Daley Road, Third Street, and Wallace Road respectfully request the Nova Scotia government, through the Department of Public Works, repave these roads as they have been rapidly deteriorating, in order to ensure the safety of residents living in the area.

There are 38 signatures, and I have affixed my own.

The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which is:

We the undersigned, as residents of Daley Road, New Victoria, respectfully request the Nova Scotia government, through the Department of Public Works, to pave Daley Road, as it is in such bad condition and rapidly deteriorating, to ensure the safety of residents living in the area.

There are 15 signatures on this petition, and I have affixed my own as per the rules of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which is:

We the undersigned residents of Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier request the Department of Public Works, Nova Scotia, repave Gardiner Road to ensure the safety of drivers and pedestrians.

There are 23 signatures on this petition, and I have affixed my own as per the rules of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Speaker, as Chair of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 455 - Emergency Management, An Act to Establish a Department of, and Authorize the Establishment of a Nova Scotia Guard.

Bill No. 459 - Health Professional Associations Continuation Act.

Bill No. 464 - Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act.

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

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, I'd like to table two documents related to a member statement I'll be making later.

THE SPEAKER: The reports are tabled.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, I would like to table a document with respect to a later member statement. This is a Canadian Press article from August 8th: "Report shows average rent in Halifax up 18 percent since last year."

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, I would like to table a document that will be relevant in my member statement.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

As Speaker of the House of Assembly, and pursuant to Section 163 of the Elections Act, I am tabling the following reports: Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Proceedings of the Pictou West By-Election, May 21, 2024, Statement of Votes and Statistics; and the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer: 2023-2024, for the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Merci, Madame la présidente. I beg leave to make a couple of introductions.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: J'aimerais tout d'abord souhaiter le bienvenu aujourd'hui à quelques représentants de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

I'd like to welcome and recognize a few members of the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse who are here today for an important day for the Acadian and Francophone community of Nova Scotia:

- la présidente - the president - Denise Comeau-Desautels;
- le directeur général - the executive director - Jules Chiasson;
- le directeur général adjoint - the assistant executive director - Emmanuel Nahimana;
- la directrice des communications - the communications director - Mélodie Jacquot-Paratte; and
- a familiar face to this Legislature - the MP for West Nova, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, the former MLA for Argyle and Argyle-Barrington, former Minister of Acadian Affairs Chris d'Entremont. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Thank you for coming. We hope you enjoy your time. The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

COLTON LEBLANC: Madame la présidente, l'année dernière, le premier ministre a proclamé le mois d'août comme le Mois du patrimoine acadien, afin de rendre hommage à plus de 400 ans d'histoire, de culture, de langue, et de traditions acadiennes et de célébrer les contributions sociales, économiques, et culturelles de la communauté acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Ce fut un moment de grande fierté pour moi en tant que fier Acadien.

Je comprends l'importance de célébrer notre patrimoine et de célébrer et de partager des histoires incroyables de notre peuple qui a joué un rôle fondamental dans l'évolution de notre province. Les couleurs de l'Acadie ont été fièrement exposées tout au long du premier Mois du patrimoine acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse, dont le thème a été L'Acadie, une histoire vivante à découvrir.

Ce mois nous a donné l'occasion de mettre en valeur la vitalité de notre communauté et de célébrer notre fierté culturelle. Il représente également l'engagement de notre gouvernement à renforcer ces partenariats avec des organismes acadiens et francophones, à élaborer des politiques telles que notre stratégie provincial d'immigration francophone, à adopter des lois telles que la Loi sur le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, à promouvoir la culture et le patrimoine acadien, à soutenir les projets communautaires, et à célébrer les contributions et les réalisations des peuples et des communautés acadiennes dans l'ensemble de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Le projet de loi que je présenterai dans quelques minutes est une nouvelle preuve de cet engagement. Je ne pourrai pas parler de réalisations de la communauté acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse sans mentionner l'incroyable succès du Congrès mondial acadien 2024, qui s'est déroulé dans le sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse il y a quelques semaines. Pendant neuf jours, des milliers de personnes du monde entier ont célébré la fierté, la force,

et la résilience de la communauté acadienne. Comme on dit en bon français, c'était vraiment tcheukafaire. Je n'ai jamais été aussi fier.

Madame la présidente, c'est avec une immense fierté que je reconnais la collaboration et le dévouement de la communauté acadienne et francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse, ainsi que l'excellent travail accompli pour faire du premier Mois du patrimoine acadienne un succès. Que la devise du peuple acadien, l'union fait la force, reste toujours vrai. Vive l'Acadie.

Last year, the Premier proclaimed August to be Acadian Heritage Month, honouring more than 400 years of Acadian history, culture, language, and traditions and celebrating the social, economic, and cultural contributions of Nova Scotia's Acadian community. It was a very proud moment for me as an Acadian.

I understand the importance of celebrating our heritage and sharing the incredible stories of our people, who have played a fundamental role in shaping our province. The colours of Acadie were proudly on display throughout Nova Scotia's first Acadian Heritage Month, which had the theme Acadie: Discover Our Vibrant History.

The month provided us the opportunity to showcase our community's enduring vitality and celebrate our cultural pride. It also represents a commitment by our government to strengthen its partnerships with Acadian and francophone organizations, develop policies like our province's francophone immigration strategy, pass legislation like the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial Act, promote Acadian culture and heritage, provide support for community projects, and celebrate the contributions and achievements of Acadian people in communities throughout Nova Scotia.

The bill I will introduce in a few minutes is further evidence of that commitment. I couldn't talk about the achievements of Nova Scotia's Acadian community without mentioning the incredibly successful Congrès mondial acadien 2024 that took place in southwest Nova Scotia a few weeks ago. Over nine days, thousands of people from around the world celebrated the pride, strength, and resiliency of the Acadian community, and I've never been prouder.

It is with immense pride that I recognize the collaboration and the dedication of Nova Scotia's Acadian and francophone communities and the excellent work to make the first Acadian Heritage Month a success. May the motto of the Acadian people, « l'union fait la force » - strength through unity - always remain true. Vive l'Acadie. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

RONNIE LEBLANC: Madame la présidente, je souhaite prendre un moment pour reconnaître et célébrer les incroyables contributions de notre communauté acadienne. Le Mois du patrimoine acadien est l'occasion parfait de réfléchir à l'histoire, à la culture, et

aux traditions riches que les Acadiens ont imparti dans notre province. C'est encourageant de voir comment la communauté acadienne continue de grandir et de prospérer tout en restant fidèle à ses racines. En tant qu'Acadien moi-même je sais à quel point nous sommes très profondément fiers de notre patrimoine. L'engagement des communautés acadiennes et francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse à préserver et à promouvoir notre culture est véritablement inspirant.

[1:15 p.m.]

L'esprit acadien est un esprit de force et d'unité, et c'est avec cet esprit que nous avançons célébrant le passé tout en construisant ensemble un avenir encore plus brillant. Vive l'Acadie.

Speaker, I want to take this moment to recognize and celebrate the incredible contributions of our Acadian community. Acadian Heritage Month was and is a wonderful time to reflect on the rich history, culture, and traditions that Acadians have brought to our province. It's heartening to see how the community has continued to grow and thrive while staying true to its roots. As an Acadian myself, I know how deeply proud we are of our heritage. The commitment shown by Acadian and francophone communities across Nova Scotia to preserve and promote our culture is truly inspiring.

The Acadian spirit is one of strength and unity, and it's with the same spirit that we move forward, celebrating the past while building an even brighter future together. Vive l'Acadie.

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

LISA LACHANCE: Madame la présidente, je suis heureuse de prendre la parole aussi pour souligner également le premier Mois du patrimoine acadien, célébré en août dernier. Le Mois du patrimoine acadien sera une occasion permanente de célébrer les contributions des Acadiens depuis plus de 400 ans et de considérer et célébrer les contributions sociales, économiques, et culturelles de la communauté acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Réapprendre et reconsidérer de nouveau notre histoire collective est une étape essentielle pour aller de l'avant à la fois pour soutenir la communauté acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse et nos communautés francophones et surtout dans le but de continuer à développer les services et la force des communautés acadiennes et francophones.

J'ai déjà eu la chance au sein de cette Assemblée de parler du formidable Congrès mondial acadien 2024, qui a été une joyeuse célébration de famille et de communauté.

J'ai hâte d'examiner le prochain projet de loi visant à soutenir les communautés acadiennes et francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Speaker, I am also pleased to rise to recognize the first Acadian Heritage Month, marked this past August. Acadian Heritage Month will be an ongoing opportunity to celebrate the contributions of Acadians over more than 400 years and to consider and celebrate the social, economic, and cultural contributions of Nova Scotia's Acadian community. Relearning and reconsidering our collective histories is an important step for moving forward, both to support the Acadian community of Nova Scotia, as well as our francophone communities, and especially with the goal of continuing to grow the services and strengths of the francophone community.

I had the chance previously to talk about the amazing Congrès mondial acadien, which was a joyful celebration of family and community.

I look forward to considering the coming piece of legislation to support Acadian and francophone communities across Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: I call a brief recess.

[1:19 p.m. The House recessed.]

[1:28 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order. The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, I think you'll find that we have the unanimous consent of the House to extend Daily Routine until 2:10 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request to extend Daily Routine until 2:10 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The request is granted.

I would like to acknowledge the members of the New Ross chapter of 4-H, who are joining us in the Speaker's Gallery. 4-H is a youth organization dedicated to developing life skills and promoting agriculture awareness for members aged 7 to 21. The four Hs stand for Head, Health, Heart and Hands, and their motto is "Learn to do by doing."

This is done through engaging members in fun projects involving making things, learning processes, and visiting places with friends, including here today. The New Ross 4-H has been in existence for over 80 years. It has about 25 members. It is the only one in the Municipality of Chester and I think with members at the Head of the Bay as well - actually, I know with members at the Head of the Bay.

Recently, they had a session with members where they learned about Robert's Rules of Order. Today they can see how these rules apply in our Legislature. Joining us are Hayden Broome, Mark Broome, Bentley Davis, Katie Hirtle, Lexie McDow, Sherri Davis and Andelyn Countway. I would ask all to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Standing ovation)

They are a great group. Thank you for coming.

[1:30 p.m.]

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Addictions and Mental Health.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,125

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

Whereas today, September 10th, is World Suicide Prevention Day, a day to bring focused attention to this complex issue, reducing stigma and raising awareness, and share the message that suicides are preventable; and

Whereas suicides touch the lives of many Nova Scotians and every death by suicide is a tragic loss; and

Whereas government remains committed to creating a universal mental health and addictions system, one that will not only respond when people are in crisis, but will also provide better access to services and support that people need to stay well;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize September 10th as World Suicide Prevention Day, and join me in reminding all Nova Scotians who are suffering that they are not alone and help is available.

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.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 471 - An Act Respecting Advancing Nova Scotia Opportunities. (Hon. Tory Rushton)

Bill No. 472 - An Act to Improve the Seniors Care Grant. (Hon. Zach Churchill)

Bill No. 473 - An Act to Ensure Healthcare Accountability and Transparency. (Susan Leblanc)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, may I make an introduction before I read my bill?

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you, Speaker. Today I would like to welcome and introduce many mothers and family members - mothers who are working for compassionate and collaborative mental health care here in Nova Scotia.

As I say your names, I would ask you to please rise: Nancy Saunders and Ernie Brennan, Ketch Harbour; Karen Saunders-Brisson of Tantallon; Angela Saunders from Truro; Janice MacEwen, Ketch Harbour; Carolyn Wood, Ketch Harbour; Seana Brackett, Ketch Harbour; Sheila Burke, Duncan's Cove; Kelly Mitchell and her mom Lavenia Nickerson of Yarmouth; Michele and Brian Haire of Lower Sackville; Cyndi and Dennis Corbett, their son Jotham Corbett, and his girlfriend Joselyn from Windsor Junction; Heather and Danny Spidell from St. Margaret's Bay; Bev Cadham from Eastern Shore; Seri Minocelo, Brenda Convoy, and Tina Kidd of Dartmouth. Welcome to the People's House. This is your House. (Applause)

Bill No. 474 -An Act to Amend Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2010, the Personal Health Information Act. (Elizabeth Smith McCrossin)

Bill No. 475 - An Act to Improve Mental Health Services. (Rafah DiCostanzo)

Bill No. 476 - An Act to Amend Chapter 26 of the Acts of 2004, the French-language Services Act. (Hon. Colton LeBlanc)

Bill No. 477 - An Act to Establish Mobile Care Teams for Mental Health. (Lisa Lachance)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Before I begin, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

STEVE CRAIG: In the East Gallery, I am honoured and pleased to introduce several people involved with the Sackville Sports Heritage Hall of Fame. Joining us today are Cheryl Dempster and Darrell Dempster - I'd ask them to rise; Janet Ferguson and Steve Ferguson; Wayde Lively and Rhonda Hines; Darrell Jessome and Pam Jessome, who are also the parents of the honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville; Ann Louise Kerr; and Glen Reid and Lucille Reid.

I would like to ask you to accept the warm wishes and welcome of the House of Assembly. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

BRD. MBRS.: SPORTS HER. HALL OF FAME SOC. - THANKS

HON. STEVE CRAIG: I rise today to thank the board members of the Sackville Sports Heritage Hall of Fame Society in Lower Sackville.

Every year, the board works diligently to select recipients to be inducted into the Sackville Sports Heritage Hall of Fame. With some of the board members being inductees themselves, they appreciate the importance of recognizing those who have made a significant contribution in the past. Members of the Hall of Fame have excelled in various levels of competition themselves as athletes, coaches, officials, and builders.

I would ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking the Sackville Sports Heritage Hall of Fame board members: Darrell Dempster, Ann Louise Kerr, Ross Sampson, Steve Ferguson, Darrell Jessome, Wayde Lively, Adam Lucas, Samantha Pashkoski, Glen Reid, Crystal Spence, and Chris Sperdakes for their dedication and commitment to the sports community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

WORLD SUICIDE PREV. DAY: NEED FOR SUPPORTS - RECOG.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Today is World Suicide Prevention Day, a day to reflect on the urgent need for drastic improvements to mental health supports and services here in Nova Scotia. Too many families in our province have been impacted by the heartbreaking loss of a loved one to suicide. We in this Chamber are all familiar with stories that have impacted families in our own communities.

In this House today, we are joined by mothers, fathers, family members, and friends who have faced this unimaginable tragedy in their own families and in their own circles. Their courage in sharing their stories and advocating for change is a reminder that we must do more to ensure mental health services are accessible, responsive, and preventive.

Early intervention, access, and awareness can really make the difference in saving lives. As legislators, we have the responsibility to make the needed legislative, regulatory, and policy changes, along with improved investments to continually improve our mental health services and supports for families, so we can do a better job protecting lives in this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

WORLD SUICIDE PREV. DAY: ACCESS TO CARE - RECOG.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise to mark World Suicide Prevention Day. We know and must reiterate today that one life lost to suicide is one too many. We stand with the families and the mothers here today in remembering those who suffered too much and are gone too soon.

We commit to redoubling our efforts to ensure that people can access the care they need when they need it, starting with the Nova Scotia suicide prevention strategy. We also commit to continuing to talk about the tragedy of suicide inside and outside of this Chamber and to break the stigma that so often prevents people from accessing care and families from being able to help.

If anyone is having thoughts of self-harm, please reach out to friends, family, health professionals, or the national Suicide Crisis Helpline by calling 9-8-8.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay-Dominion.

SCHOOL STAFF: COM. SERV. - THANKS

JOHN WHITE: As the weather begins to change, I think of the thousands of teachers, support staff, and administrators who are back in the classroom. So many lesson

plans have been completed and tweaked, classrooms have been converted to welcoming environments, and students have been welcomed back.

All the preparation meetings have led to excellent school openings across the province, but in addition to delivering lessons, our professional teachers bring valuable skills to many community organizations: food banks, art groups, church groups, and planning committees. Teachers impact our lives in a very positive way. From youth groups to sports teams, teaching staff serve as positive role models, providing valuable life skills to our youth in and out of the classroom.

[1:45 p.m.]

With the celebration of International Literacy Day this past weekend, I want to extend a very special thank you to all our professional staff for doing so much work in our community and making our community a better place to live.

I'd like to wish all an enjoyable and successful 2024-25 school year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: In the gallery, we are joined by Nancy Saunders and Ernie Brennan, Nancy's sisters Angela and Karen, and many of their friends from Ketch Harbour. I deeply admire their strength and commitment. What Nancy and Ernie are doing - changing this unimaginable tragedy of losing their son and turning it into an advocacy to help so many others. Please welcome them again to the House.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

SAUNDERS, N./BRENNAN, E.: RESILIENCE - RECOG.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I rise today to acknowledge the incredible strength and resilience of Nancy Saunders and Ernie Brennan from Ketch Harbour. After the heartbreaking loss of their son, Ben Brennan, in 2023, their lives were forever changed.

Nancy was unable to get Ben the help he needed due to our privacy laws. She was unable to provide important information to the health providers, unable to get him an appointment, and unable to change an appointment, and she was not notified of his release from the hospital.

In Ben's memory, Nancy and Ernie have become strong advocates to ensure that no other family endures this loss.

I ask the House to join me in welcoming Nancy, Ernie, Angela, Karen, and many of their friends to the House today. Let's honour Ben's memory by supporting those who need it most in our communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I'd like to introduce Michele and Brian Haire as well as Tina Kidd. I'll ask them to stand once more.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

PARENTS: SUICIDE VICTIMS - RECOG.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: As part of the Nova Scotia moms advocating for compassionate and collaborative mental health care, Michele and Brian Haire of Lower Sackville are here with us today.

Michele and Brian lost their son, Cameron, age 26, to suicide in 2023. They tried to get help for their son, but without a family physician, it made it near impossible. The stigma against mental illness and the knowledge of the horrific experiences of those who go to the ER departments in mental health distress kept their son from going to the local ER. As a Nova Scotia Health Authority employee, Cameron also felt that he would have no privacy going to the local ER. Michele and her husband advocate for compassionate and collaborative mental health care.

Tina Kidd is a mom advocating also. Tina lost her son, Devon Kidd, only six months ago. Devon died from a drug overdose after several suicide attempts and many trips to the hospital - five times in a two-week period in February. Each time, he was sent home, there was no conversation with family, and he was left to deal with his mental illness crisis and addiction on his own.

Today I thank them for being here and remind each one of us that the laws of this land and the laws of this province are made by us, and us alone, in collaboration with the people of Nova Scotia. I thank them for coming.

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

MITCHELL, KELLY: MENTAL HEALTH EFFORTS - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I rise today to talk about the efforts of Kelly Mitchell and her family following the loss of her daughter. Kelly lost her 14-year-old daughter, Aidaen, to suicide. After noticing a dire lack of resources available to young people in Yarmouth, Kelly founded a non-profit youth centre in Yarmouth called Aidaen's Place to support youth wellness and advocate for collaborative and compassionate mental health care.

Kelly bought a house and painted it purple, the colour of Aidaen's room. Throughout the week, youth between the ages of nine and 17 can use Aidaen's Place as a safe space to learn life skills and get involved in programs that give back to the community. Aidaen's Place has offered nightly suppers, and the Mitchells have also made breakfast and lunch boxes. They collect clothing and hang bags of supplies from their porch if they have more than they need for the community to take from. Kelly wants systemic changes so that families like hers could help their loved ones when they need help and that they never have to experience the tragedy that her family has.

I ask all members in the Assembly to extend our sympathy to Kelly and to her friends, and thank her for her ongoing dedication to supporting Nova Scotian youth.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

SRCE TEACHERS: EDUCATOR IMPACT AWDS. - CONGRATS.

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: Speaker, I would like to recognize the following Strait Regional Centre for Education teachers who received Educator Impact Awards:

Gaye Middleton is a Primary and Grade 1 teacher at East Richmond Education Centre. She designs instructional strategies and learning activities that meet the needs of her students to help grow their literacy skills.

Jennifer Burch teaches Grade 3 and 4 integrated English language arts and reading recovery at Felix Marchand Education Centre. She creates a safe space for her students, developing activities to support students in their learning journey.

Shaun Kennedy teaches at Richmond Education Centre and Academy. He gets to know his students, sets clear expectations, and asks students to demonstrate what they have learned, fostering an engaged classroom.

In honour of International Literacy Day this past Sunday, I ask all members of this Legislature to please join me in congratulating these SRCE teachers, who demonstrate educator excellence.

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

SPIDELL, HEATHER: MENTAL HEALTH EFFORTS - RECOG.

HON. BEN JESSOME: Today, on World Mental Health Day, I'd like to just acknowledge that when Nova Scotians and people put in the work and the time to put forward good ideas that are supported by professionals from the health community, from the legal community, and from people with lived experience, we do our part as legislators to listen and to act to create changes that will improve the abilities for people to fight mental health as a disease.

I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize Heather Spidell, who has been a friend and a tremendous advocate, someone who's influenced me to get up here and speak about how important it is to support people who are dealing with mental health care battles. She's a grieving aunt of her nephew Adam, who leaves behind a beautiful family. It's up to us to do our part so that folks like Adam have the tools to be successful in their struggles, to get through it and live their lives happily and successfully. Thank you all for being here today. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, could I say a word of introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

GARY BURRILL: Well, it's a wonderful, warm day for us in the House that we're able to welcome this afternoon Evan Louise Hornbeck, the newborn daughter of Evey Hornbeck - Evey, who is on maternity leave from her position in communications with the NDP caucus. Evan was born in May and though her mother has been here in the House many times, this is Evan's first visit to the House of Assembly. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SUICIDE: NEED FOR CONVERSATIONS - RECOG.

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to recognize that September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day. Today I stand to raise awareness about the importance of reducing stigma and to encourage open conversations to prevent suicides.

Changing the narrative on suicide is about transforming how we perceive this complex issue and shifting from a culture of silence and stigma to one of openness, understanding, and support. Every conversation, no matter how small, contributes to a supportive, understanding society.

I would like all members of this House to join me in encouraging everyone to start the conversation on suicide and suicide prevention so we can break down barriers and raise awareness and create better cultures of support.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke.

STEPDAUGHTER, OLIVIA - BIRTHDAY WISHES

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I want to take time today to extend birthday wishes to someone who's become very dear to me over the past 12 years. My stepdaughter Olivia Myria Claire Huot is celebrating her 25th birthday today.

Over the years, Olivia and I have had a lot of ups and downs, but we've grown to become really good friends. I'm proud of the woman that she's become. She's actually living one of her dreams today. It was to attend Fashion Week in New York City for her 25th birthday, where she and her brother Jessie are right now.

Speaker, I'm anxious for the two of them to get back so that I can hear how everything in the Big Apple went, as well as so we can eat cake. I'd like to ask all the members of the Legislature to join me today in wishing Olivia a very happy 25th birthday. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

BURKE, SHEILA: ADVOCACY FOR SON - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Today I met Sheila Burke from Duncans Cove. Sheila's 29-year-old son, Luke, died of suicide in 2018. In talking to Sheila today, she tells me that Luke was diagnosed as suicidal, but released. In her advocacy for her son, she has felt ignored and dismissed and powerless at times to help her son through his journey.

Sheila wants the changes proposed by the Nova Scotia moms so that other families do not have to go through the excruciating pain that she suffers every day. To Sheila and to everyone here, my heart is with you. So many families have been impacted by suicide and ensuring that the supports were there.

I came here today not thinking I would be doing this member statement, but I met her and it's an honour to meet her. It was a privilege to meet her, and I'm honoured to stand on my feet to advocate, not only on her behalf for her son, but for families across the province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

RENT INCREASES: NEED FOR ACTION - RECOG.

GARY BURRILL: I'm going to speak to a different subject than the previous speaker. Speaker, all MLAs, particularly government MLAs, ought to have been gobsmacked by the report, issued just a couple of weeks ago by rentals.ca, which showed that average rent in Halifax has increased to \$2,378, an average increase of 18 per cent. Data released in the report indicates that the average one-bedroom in Halifax is now \$2,050; the average two-bedroom, \$2,680; the average three-bedroom, \$3,170.

Halifax's 18 per cent average rent increase is a more than 12-percentage-point increase greater than the Canadian average. Halifax's 18 per cent average rent increase is 13 percentage points above the rent cap of 5 per cent, which is clearly failing in its only purpose: to curtail rent increases in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

D'ENTREMONT, YVETTE: MUSICAL PROD. - CONGRATS.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: The Congrès mondial acadien 2024 proved to be a very busy, fun, and exciting time in Southwest Nova Scotia, with an abundance of events to take part in. A special event was the production of *La voix de la mer*, written by singer/songwriter, playwright and producer, and former high school teacher of mine, Yvette d'Entremont of West Pubnico.

Yvette has been writing and producing musicals for the past 30 years and has won numerous accolades. She had the honour of presenting her 2013 musical *La voix de la mer*, where her music and artistic works reflected her energy, her passion for the people and life in a fishing village. Surrounding communities can relate to this production depicting the life of fishers and families forever linked to the sea, despite the misfortunes that can happen.

I ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating Yvette d'Entremont, her cast, and crew on a fantastic production during the Congrès mondial acadien 2024.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

CORBETT, JOTHAM: SHARING STORY - RECOG.

HON. KELLY REGAN: A little while ago, we were introduced to Windsor Junction residents Cyndi and Dennis Corbett and their son Jotham Corbett and his girlfriend, Joselyn, and I'm so glad that they're with us here today. Jotham Corbett of Windsor Junction lives with schizophrenia. He supports the changes the Nova Scotia moms are advocating for. Jotham knows how important it is to have family advocating for him. He also knows it's important to have collaboration between the health system and families

when a loved one is experiencing symptoms that prevent them from being able to help themselves.

[2:00 p.m.]

Jotham has publicly shared his story and has joined the Nova Scotia moms in their advocacy. I'll note that Jotham was very fortunate. He did provide consent to share information, and he credits the love and support of his family in the collaboration between his family and the Nova Scotia Early Psychosis Program with saving his life. I want to thank him for his candour and for coming forward today and other days to ensure we hear his story. Thank you, Jotham.

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

MINERS MUSEUM: IMPORTANCE - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: It is with deep concern this Summer and again on the weekend I learned the Cape Breton Miners Museum was being denied entry into the family of Nova Scotia museums.

The museum is home to the world-renowned Men of the Deeps. This choir tours the province, country, and world, sharing their experiences of working in the pit. They tell stories of friendships, the strikes, the history, all woven into a human experience.

The province's Miners' Memorial Day is, in fact, Davis Day, named for a man murdered during the 1925 strike. That history is in the Glace Bay Miners Museum.

The museum is unique in that it offers underground tours to visitors. The tour goes under the Atlantic Ocean where miners worked for generations. During the tour, visitors learned that the French opened the first mine.

Speaker, the uniqueness of the Miners Museum, the rich history it provides, it is reason enough to give it entry into the Nova Scotia Museum and provide more funding.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

KINGS CO. MUSEUM: 120TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. JOHN LOHR: I rise today to recognize and congratulate Kentville's Kings County Museum building as they celebrate the 120-year milestone anniversary this year. The Kings County Museum building was designed by noted architect Leslie Fairn and the building opened its doors in 1904 as the Kings County Courthouse and administrative centre for the municipality of the County of Kings.

In 1980, the Kings Historical Society took over the building and began operating it as a museum. It houses a collection of more than 25,000 physical artifacts and archives, including an extensive textile collection and a genealogy department. The museum attracts many researchers and provides a good place to educate young people and adds to the community character and charm of Kentville.

Please join me today to congratulate the Kings County Museum as they celebrate their building's 120th anniversary.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

COWIE HILL CHILD CARE CTR.: CONTRIB. TO PROV. - RECOG.

ALI DUALE: I would like to recognize the outstanding work of the Cowie Hill Child Care Centre for its commitment to providing high-quality care and education to young children in Halifax Armdale. Speaker, we know how important it is to educate our future generation in this province. Therefore, I ask members of this House to join me in thanking the Cowie Hill Child Care Centre for their valuable contribution to our province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

FIXED TERM LEASES: NEED TO END - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, in response to last month's Health Committee on the connection between housing and health care, the Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia wrote a letter that was made public today and I tabled it earlier.

The letter accuses a witness at the committee meeting of providing a "biased, unfair and incomplete" account of the connection between fixed term leases and homelessness. Witness Sheri Lecker, the Executive Director of Adsum for Women and Children, said at the meeting:

I think, first of all, we have to look at what some of the pathways are into homelessness or into an experience of not being housed. There are some pathways that could be closed. Until they're closed, we are going to continue to see people who experience renovictions or evictions, and a great many people are losing their housing due to fixed term leases.

I would think that someone with 20 years of experience would know of what she speaks when it comes to these matters. Further, I would suggest that most people in the province agree with the wisdom of ending the pathways to homelessness. I would like to add my name to that list of people.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

DAVIS, COL. JEFF: 14 WING GREENWOOD SERV. - THANKS

CHRIS PALMER: On August 23rd, a Change of Command Ceremony was held at 14 Wing Greenwood to welcome the new base commander Colonel Luc Vachon and bid a fond farewell to outgoing base commander Colonel Jeff Davis. I was pleased to join many from the community and those in uniform as this grand military tradition played out inside one of the beautiful hangars on base. The ceremony was a reminder of the rich history of the Royal Canadian Air Force, which continues to celebrate its 100th anniversary.

As the MLA representing CFB Greenwood, I would like to wish Colonel Jeff Davis all the best as he takes on his new assignment and thank him for his contributions to not only the military base but also to the surrounding community.

I would also like to welcome Colonel Vachon to our community. I look forward to working with him to continue to strengthen the ties between 14 Wing Greenwood, and the greater community of Kings West.

I am honoured to represent those in uniform from CFB Greenwood here in this House, and I again want to thank them for their service to our country.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

BAWTREE, MICHAEL: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. KEITH IRVING: Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the extraordinary life of Michael Bawtree, who passed away on August 24th. A visionary and cultural force, Michael's contributions to the arts in Nova Scotia are immeasurable. As the founding artistic director of the Atlantic Theatre Festival, he left an indelible mark on theatre in this province, bringing creativity and passion to every project that he touched.

Michael's career spanned the globe, but it was here in Nova Scotia where his influences are deeply felt. From his work at Acadia University to his community initiatives, like the revitalization of the Wolfville Legion and his contributions to the Wolfville Historical Society, Michael's dedication to both theatre and community will be remembered.

Michael performed in this very building, playing the role of Joseph Howe, and also toured schools with his book *Joe Howe to the Rescue*. His legacy lives on in the lives he touched and the projects he nurtured.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing and celebrating the remarkable life of Michael Bawtree.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

WORLD SUICIDE PREV. DAY: NEED FOR CHANGES - RECOG.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, today, World Suicide Prevention Day, I have to say how honoured I was to be able to work with the families, the mothers, the fathers, the sisters, and support people here today as they held a press conference trying to draw attention to the needed legislative changes around mental health care here in the province of Nova Scotia.

It is a very sombre day. It is a day to remember those we have lost, support those who are struggling, and to renew our commitment to mental health and well-being. On this important day we are reminded of the urgent need for compassion, for understanding, and for effective support systems.

Today, Nova Scotia moms advocating for compassionate, collaborative mental health care are asking us to make changes, asking for legislative changes, balancing laws between the protection of privacy and protection of life. I believe there is nothing more powerful than mothers who are determined to make this change. It is non-partisan and I call us all to join together to make the needed changes.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SAINT PETER'S CHURCH FOOD BANK: CLOSURE - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, the Food Bank at the former Saint Peter's Church, now a chapter of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, was unique in its mission. It delivered food to people in need in Dartmouth five days a week. Unfortunately, the food bank was legally dissolved this past April of 2024. After running the bank for 30 years, the main organizers decided it was time to retire.

My office, and I am sure others, regularly referred constituents to the food bank, especially those who were in a food emergency and had mobility issues. If the request came in before 11:00 a.m., the delivery of food could be made on the same day.

We know that food banks are not the solution to food insecurity. Living wages, higher income assistance rates and affordable housing, among other things, are the solutions but in the meantime, food banks play an important role in feeding Nova Scotians.

I ask this House to join me in thanking all of the volunteers who ran the Saint Peter's Church food bank over the course of decades. It was an invaluable service, and it is missed.

THE SPEAKER: We have 17 seconds left. Does anyone think they can get a member statement in?

THE SPEAKER: Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

FTB: FOOD SECURITY - IMPROVE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: It has never been more expensive to live in this province. Our rental increases are the highest in the country, power bills have been shooting through the roof, and the cost of groceries is pushing families to the brink. Just between April and June of this year, 36,000 individuals in Nova Scotia had to receive support from Feed Nova Scotia, according to the executive director, Nick Jennery.

We know that food insecurity and financial pressures increase the mental health challenges that people deal with. My question to the Premier is: Does he not see, considering this food insecurity challenge, that it would have been a better idea to put food on the table for our kids than give one million dollars to Sobeys Corporate?

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

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: What I would say is look at the School Lunch Program, a first for this province. It's just one example, but it's an important example of how we're helping Nova Scotians with the cost of living.

It will make a difference for young people. Young people coming to school need to be coming able to learn at school, and if they're not able to come with the nutrition they need, they're going to be able to get it with the new School Lunch Program.

I think that's something that the Opposition should acknowledge. It's something that never happened before, but it happened under this government.

ZACH CHURCHILL: The majority of provinces are moving forward with this. This is something we advocated for, and the government should make that program free for Nova Scotians, like we've advocated for.

Poverty rates and food insecurity are shooting through the roof here in Nova Scotia. We have the highest rates in the country. Groceries are becoming more and more unaffordable for working families, and the Premier's Nova Scotia Loyal program, which was intended - and advertised - to put more local food on the tables of Nova Scotians, has proved to be nothing more than a corporate giveaway to his friends and allies in Sobeys Corporate.

Does the Premier not see that giving taxpayers' money would have been better used to an organization like Feed Nova Scotia than giving it to one of the highest profiting . . .

ALLAN MACMASTER: I know that in just this past year our government has given about 10 million dollars to all kinds of organizations around the province to help them help Nova Scotians feed themselves. There are all kinds of volunteers out there doing this work. We believe it's our role to help support them, and I can tell you these groups are all over the province. They're in just about every community around the province. Some of them have their own kitchens, but the funding that we're giving them is helping them, whether they need support with those kitchens, with capital improvements, or to procure food to prepare to give meals out to people who need them.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Not once does the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board defend the Nova Scotia Loyal program or the taxpayers' money that's gone to Sobeys Corporate instead of going into organizations that help put food on the tables for Nova Scotians. Since the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board won't defend that investment in the Nova Scotia Loyal program, will he commit to taking that money back and giving it to the organizations that need it most and that are actually doing the job of putting more local food on the tables for kids in our province?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Obviously, what the member is leaving out of the discussion is that there are multiple parts to Nova Scotia Loyal. He's zeroed in on one. There'll be other vendors that participate as we grow, but let's not lose sight of the goal here, and that is to promote Nova Scotia products and to be loyal to Nova Scotia.

We have some great vendors here. We produce great products. We want to spotlight those, we want to profile them, and it's a good thing that's happening. It's a new initiative. It's a big initiative, and big, new things are hard, but we're persistent.

I will tell you, even at this stage the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture - they're in support of what we're doing. In fact, they said it's time to adopt a unified, non-partisan approach that focuses on developing Nova Scotia-made solutions. That is what Nova Scotia Loyalty is all about.

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

PREM.: RENTAL INCREASES - LIMIT

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Our five per cent rent cap is the highest in the country. Even so, some of Halifax's largest landlords report double-digit operating income growth in the first quarter of this year. These profits were largely driven up by unit turnover where

fixed-term leases mean there is no limit to the rental increase allowed. In response, this government is working to make evictions faster and easier while protecting these profits.

[2:15 p.m.]

I'd like to ask the Premier: How is this a balanced approach?

THE PREMIER: We are trying to strike a balance. Of course, the member is focused on the landlord part of it. These tenants are also neighbours. You want good neighbours in these buildings too. When somebody is being evicted, oftentimes it can be because they're not a good neighbour. We're trying to find this balance here.

The best way to tackle the cost of living, the best way to tackle the housing crisis is more housing, driving down the price of housing, driving down the price of rentals. That's why we're bringing down barriers to home construction. I'll tell you, Speaker, our plan is working. Housing starts are up. Our goal is 40,000 new homes. We're on track. We're building new homes. There are more homes today than there were in 2021, and we'll continue with our plan.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Most people in this province are being evicted because there is a financial incentive to do so. With an 18.2 per cent increase in rental cost year over year, the 30 per cent of Nova Scotians who rent are desperate for some relief. They need rent control that is tied to the unit so that that financial incentive to evict them every 12 months goes away.

What is the Premier's message to renters, students, health care workers, families, and seniors who are struggling to keep up with these increasing costs?

THE PREMIER: The solution is more housing, more opportunities to rent different places. This is why we're focused on building more housing across the spectrum: student housing, affordable housing, public housing for the first time in years. We're making investments to make sure that the housing stock goes up.

When we think about the affordability crisis and the struggles that people have, I would urge the members opposite that if either party had a real concern about the cost of living, they would call on their federal cousins to scrap the carbon tax. That's a tax that will take \$400 million out of the hands of Nova Scotians just this year alone. That is part of the solution. I ask them to call on their cousins to get rid of it.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: The truth, beyond the partisan talking points, is that this government has failed to address the rapidly growing homeless population during their term. It has now quadrupled in the three years that they have been in office. We have heard from advocates that fixed-term leases are a "key pathway to homelessness." Until this flow is turned off, these numbers will continue to rise.

Will this Premier commit today to tying this rent cap to the unit, ending the incentive to evict and ensuring that people today can stay in their homes?

THE PREMIER: Unlike past Liberal and NDP governments, we are making record investments in the housing stock in the province. The Liberals simply refused to invest, the NDP sat on literally tens of millions of dollars from the federal government and did nothing with it. Imagine where we'd be if they would have made those investments. We're making those investments.

I just want to remind the members, none of these problems happened overnight. We didn't break it, but we're fixing it. I'll just remind the member - I'll quote from former Nova Scotia NDP Cabinet Minister Maureen MacDonald. Maureen MacDonald said "there are no overnight quick solutions to the affordability and homelessness problem. Also the current situation is largely attributable to the policies of the federal Trudeau government."

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

DED: ECONOMIC GROWTH - INCREASE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Two key promises made by this premier to move our economy - one was the Nova Scotia Loyal program. He promised Nova Scotians that would contribute 1.4 billion to the GDP. Instead, we have a program where Nova Scotians can collect 50 Scene+ points 12 weeks of the year, leading to an annual incentive of \$6 every year. You can't even buy a gallon of milk with that.

No wonder we are now last place when it comes to our GDP. We have the lowest per capita of any province or state in North America. What is the Premier going to do to reverse this trend and get us out of last place on economic growth?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: The Leader of the Opposition is correct. It is not a happy statistic, and it is one that goes back over decades and many different governments, including those with whom he has served. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to minimize all that the Nova Scotia Loyal initiative is. It is multifaceted - and I am proud of every piece of it. He is conveniently neglecting the fact that we have made changes to procurement, among other initiatives, where Nova Scotia businesses are given a 10 per cent advantage - points- or price-wise - within trade limits. This is something to be proud of.

ZACH CHURCHILL: If the government thinks saving Nova Scotians \$6 a year is something to be proud of, well, I guess that is setting the bar very low here.

The other major economic promise that this government made - part of their economic plan - was a Better Pay Cheque Guarantee. Instead of having a Better Pay Cheque Guarantee, Nova Scotians have the lowest paycheques in Canada. I'll table that.

This is a Premier who has not been able to deliver better paycheques, who has overseen the worst economic growth in our country and, at the same time, is trying to double the population, increasing costs on Nova Scotians for housing, services, goods, and everything. Does this Premier not see that his lack of initiative or his plan to double the population is actually creating more harm than good on working Nova Scotians?

SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: We have seen again and again the negativity of the Opposition parties and recently trying to cause fear and concern amongst Nova Scotians - including former Premier Stephen McNeil - at a time when we have momentum, we are growing, we are investing, and we are moving the needle on our businesses, investing in productivity and in new equipment. Since making the Innovation Rebate Program, we've approved 71 projects across the province - \$236 million in productivity investments.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

DED: ECONOMIC PLAN NOT WORKING - ADMIT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I wish the government was less concerned about what people are saying about them and more concerned about the facts and the challenges that Nova Scotians are dealing with - the lowest GDP growth in North America - and you wonder why.

This government has no economic plan, they're blowing money, and we've seen this even with their subsidized foreign wine program that would have cost Nova Scotian taxpayers \$6 to \$12 million per year. However, in July, the government confirmed that they were on track to pay out more than \$10 million a year in subsidies for foreign-produced wine to just two commercial bottlers who employ not as many people as the farm wine sector. My question to the Premier is: Is it not evidence that this economic plan of this government is not working?

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: The fact is that our government cares a great deal what Nova Scotians have to say. That is why, on all of our programs and policies, we have gone to Nova Scotians - notably on Nova Scotia Loyal - where more than 10,000 Nova Scotians generously shared their time and their thoughts on where they shop, how they shop, and what incentives might be able to move them towards more local purchasing. This again - unless it is the opinion of the Opposition Leader that we should not be listening to Nova Scotians, it's time we give some new things a try.

ZACH CHURCHILL: The problem is that if you're a wealthy Nova Scotian with close political ties and donate to the Tory party, that's who gets listened to in this province

primarily. We've seen that with the wine subsidy program. That's a subsidy program that was paused but would have cost \$10 million to taxpayers so that two bottling plants could have gotten up to \$10 million. One of those individuals has a very close link to the Premier and has fundraised for that Premier.

Does the Premier not think it would be better to be loyal to Nova Scotian wineries that are grown here and built here and draw tourists from around the world and are major award winners than supporting factories that are bottling surplus fermented grapes imported from Australia and Chile?

SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: The member is talking about the wineries. I think it's a pretty well-known fact that we're currently working with both commercial wineries and grape growers who produce their own wines in this province. That's happening.

What I must point out for the member - I don't know if he's not seen this in the last few years, but we've seen some of the lowest rates of unemployment since the early 1970s in this province, and we've had some of the largest population influxes since the 1920s. People are coming here because there is opportunity in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

FTB: COMMERCIAL WINE BOTTLING PGM. - END

HON. KEITH IRVING: When millions of dollars of taxpayers' money are being used for government programs, Nova Scotians expect that their government knows what it's trying to achieve. We know from the farm wine industry that the commercial bottling program puts at risk 1,100 jobs and tens of millions of public and private investment. Will the Premier explain what the objectives of the commercial bottling program are?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: The member will know that that program was paused, and the support that's going out to both commercial wineries and grape growers is the same as it was before.

KEITH IRVING: What we did not hear was any job creation associated with this \$1 million program, any investment, or any increases to buy local. No study went into this. We know that this is going to hurt industry and create nothing except either putting money into two friends' pockets or giving money to grape growers around the world, not local grape growers. While the Premier wants to use taxpayers' money to help his friends, will the minister stand up for local agriculture and rural jobs and demand the Premier end the commercial bottling program?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Part of the work that's going on with both of these working groups is evaluating all of the data that they've put forward and that has been put forward in the past in terms of economic returns that both of these sectors provide to our Nova Scotian economy. There's no question that they provide a return to the economy, and there's no question, under all stripes of governments, that both have gotten support from the Province. It should be pointed out, Speaker, that the first government to support the commercial bottlers in this province was actually that member's government when he was part of it.

[2:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

RTA: ENFORCEMENT UNIT REPORT - PUBLICIZE

GARY BURRILL: My question is for the Minister responsible for Residential Tenancies, who had indicated in the last session of the House that when a decision was made for or against an enforcement unit for tenancies, the consultant's report that had recommended it would be made public. Now that the decision against the enforcement unit has been made, will the minister, without diverting into his view of the pros and cons of such a unit - we're familiar with that - simply tell us when we will be able to see the report?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Now that we've made a decision as a government to not proceed with a compliance enforcement unit, I would caution the members of this House, and others who have perhaps twisted leaked versions or documents of that report, that it did not recommend that government do so. It provided options for government to look at and examine. We examined those options and conducted further evaluation across the country, and it would not meet the needs of tenants and landlords. Yes, we will be making that report public.

GARY BURRILL: I think this is an important commitment because the release of a consultant's report of this sort is really the most normal thing in the world, whatever its recommendations are. A report is made public, and the government acts on some of the recommendations but doesn't act on some of the others. The government's work is judged relative to this. This is how the whole thing goes. When a report is not put forward to the public, as this one hasn't been, people naturally assume there's something that the government doesn't want them to know, which they will continue to assume until that report is made public. When is it that the government is going to put the report in the hands of the people of the province?

COLTON LEBLANC: I'll have to get back to the member with an exact timeline, but again, we'll have plenty of time to debate the legislation before the floor of the Legislature. I want to remind the member that the objectives I outlined in the compliance and enforcement unit report by Davis Pier - balancing the rights of tenants and landlords

to ensure fairness and equity, promoting deterrence on early resolution, accessibility, and being able to act quickly and resolve emergencies and high-priority situations - are all objectives that we are meeting through the amendments we're bringing forward through the legislation, as well as internal process changes to improve the program, making it better and fairer for everyone.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

FTB: COMMERCIAL WINE BOTTLER SUBSIDY - ABANDON

CARMAN KERR: The local farm wine industry has been very clear about what negative impacts the proposed commercial bottling subsidy offers. Nova Scotia's 20 farm wineries support more than 1,100 jobs, with more than \$250 million in direct economic impact every year. I'll table that information. Instead of supporting this industry, the Premier has decided to support his friends who are commercial bottlers. My question to the Premier is: Will he commit today to not subsidizing commercial bottlers and instead focus on local farm wine producers?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I'm surprised that suddenly the Official Opposition sees this as a program that should no longer exist, because it was they who started it when they were in government just a few years ago. I don't understand why it was seemingly such a good idea back then to start it and now they're saying to discontinue the program that they started.

CARMAN KERR: The difference is the exponential funding that's being proposed to commercial bottlers versus back then - an exponential difference. I'm surprised the Minister of Agriculture won't answer these questions. He hasn't done so since the Spring sitting. Nova Scotia has a booming wine tourism industry that brings almost \$50 million a year to the province. I've tabled that document. Tourists are coming to see wineries and taste Nova Scotia wine; they're not coming to check out bottling companies and plants. The benefits of this industry are clear. Will the Premier commit to abandoning the subsidy to bottlers?

ALLAN MACMASTER: We've gotten some clarity. It's not the policy that should be discontinued; it's the increase. The increase was paused a few months ago, and as we all know, working groups have commenced with both commercial bottlers and with grape growers to look at what the future might hold. We're continuing to work with them, and the increase that the member speaks of has been paused, but I'm glad to hear that they're not suggesting to get rid of that program altogether.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

DED: INDEPENDENT GROCERS - SUPPORT

BRAEDON CLARK: One group that appears to have been left out in the cold when it comes to the Nova Scotia Loyal program is independent grocers, like Luminare Co. Wellness Market in my riding of Bedford South, which called the announcement of Nova Scotia Loyal “ridiculous” and said, “Why don’t they” - meaning the government - “focus on supporting local independents?”

As we all know, local retailers are doing the frontline work to ensure that Nova Scotia products are available to Nova Scotians, and local retailers like Luminare and others often have better prices and more options than some of the big grocers. My question to the minister is: Will she commit to supporting independent grocers across the province, rather than big corporations through Nova Scotia Loyal?

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Genuinely, thank you for the question. Again, in this attempt to make Nova Scotia Loyal a one-trick pony or a one-legged stool, this program is about supporting small businesses, including our growers, our producers and our manufacturers - yes, our retailers of all types. For this program to succeed, it is essential that it reaches people wherever they are doing their shopping. Retailers, independent retailers, can reach out and get the branding. Studies make it clear that when people can find local products on their shelves, in their freezers, they will purchase them.

BRAEDON CLARK: I appreciate that retailers might get the branding, but I think they would prefer to have the business of people walking through the doors. We all know the benefits of buying local - it’s obvious - but the math for Nova Scotia Loyal, at this point, doesn’t add up. The government projected at one point in time \$1.4 billion in economic activity that would be generated by Nova Scotia Loyal. I know it just launched, but I would ask the minister: Does her department have numbers, and when will that \$1.4 billion materialize?

SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: As the Premier has already stated, we are building a movement, and it is across Nova Scotia. As a for-instance, while the Opposition likes to drive down Nova Scotia Loyal, we received an email from the offices of the member for Fairview-Clayton Park telling us what a fantastic program the school vouchers to farmers’ markets were.

Yes, we absolutely are keeping the data because we want this program to succeed. We know that we will have to tweak and adjust it as we go along. On farmers’ markets, as a for-instance, 41 per cent of the families using their vouchers were brand new to those places.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

DED: LOCAL PRODUCERS - HELP

FRED TILLEY: In my head I'm just trying to do the math on how many Scene+ points are \$1.4 billion, but I didn't have time to figure it out. The Premier is intent on giving Sobeys money while Nova Scotians are paying more for groceries, and Nova Scotia producers can barely afford to get into big corporations like Sobeys due to the listing fees, advertising fees, and the other fees that producers and others have to pay in order to get their products on the shelves. My question to the minister would be: Does she think the money would have been better spent giving it to the producers so they could actually get their product in the stores, as opposed to the big corporations?

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Again, the name for the incentives to get more space or better placement in grocery stores is called "trade spend." The member is absolutely right that it is a global market and our small producers are at a great disadvantage, which is why having stickers on the shelves, having what's called a wobblers hanging out in front of the shelf, and helping our own domestic marketplace recognize all of the offerings that are already in their stores so that they can try them out, and when sales come up because it is a quality product, that provides more shelf space going forward.

FRED TILLEY: I'd like to thank the minister for that education on retailing, considering I worked at Sobeys for a large number of years and charged those fees. It would be great that they have a wobblers or a sign if they could get their product into the store to begin with.

Speaker, without being able to afford a listing fee, they can't afford to get the product. My question is: Will the minister commit to helping local producers work with corporations to get their products on the shelves?

SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I am very pleased to tell the member opposite that work is already happening. In fact, while the Opposition likes to fixate on a particular aspect of this program, we have worked with all different types of vendors. When it comes to major grocery, we have worked with other vendors who, for instance, don't have points programs but have told us it is good business to carry more local product and that is why we have made investments as well for the Communities Economic Development Fund in food hubs, including the Cape Breton Food Hub and the Halifax Food Hub, to help our small producers to have shared space for storage, for putting together orders, and for transportation.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DHW: HOGAN COURT AGREEMENT - CONFIRM

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. In March of this year, representatives from the Nova Scotia Health Authority said that

agreements with Shannex over the sale of the Hogan Court hotel were ongoing and that it would be finalized in a matter of weeks. At the time, full costs were still unknown. Shannex's rate was being negotiated and consultants were still being paid for the work on the project. My question is: Can the minister confirm if a final agreement is in place and what is the total cost to Nova Scotians?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, we continue with this exciting project that we are happy to partner with Shannex on: Parkland West Bedford, a state-of-the-art transition to care facility. While they have taken over the property itself, we continue to work with them and more details will be available.

SUSAN LEBLANC: That's a disappointing response, actually. The Auditor General's February report on the facility raised serious questions about this government's use of untendered agreements, even with Shannex themselves, and despite this criticism, the government's tender database shows a June 13th approval of a startling \$120 million untendered contract to Shannex. My question is: Can the minister tell us what this \$120 million is getting us, and why, despite the warnings and criticisms from the Auditor General, this government is still spending massive sums of taxpayers' dollars in the dark?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: The building and the model that has been innovated and imagined in Nova Scotia at West Bedford is something that we should all be very proud of. We have world-class experts who are going to be providing care to frail, elderly people who are in hospital currently, who are transitioning to a home that is going to provide state-of-the-art elder care, which we need in this province. We are so fortunate to have that and we will continue to work on innovative ideas. It does happen through an alternative procurement offer which allows us to be nimble. We are either too fast or we are too slow, but on this deal, I think we are just right.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

EECD: FREE SCHOOL SUPPLIES - PROVIDE

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: As we all know, this past week, students have returned to school and I want to wish them all well, as well as the educators and the staff. As we know, this year we are looking forward to the rollout of the Nova Scotia School Lunch Program to complement the breakfast program. These are two very important services now that will be offered in schools to students to take away some of the cost, but something else I think that we can be doing is providing free school supplies to students across Nova Scotia. My question to the Premier or the Minister of Education: Will they commit to looking at free school supplies to all schools across the province?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: I echo the member opposite's welcome back to families, staff, and students across the province. We are excited to welcome our students back to school.

We know affordability is an issue for families. That is why we have introduced Nova Scotia's made in Nova Scotia School Lunch Program - fully funded by Nova Scotia - so that students across the province can have access to affordable lunches that are free for those who need it. That is an over-\$18 million investment by Nova Scotia.

[2:45 p.m.]

We also know that families need assistance in other ways, and we're supporting families with school supplies, in addition to the work that we're doing on lunches.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I do want to recognize all the advocates that have advocated for not only the lunch program but the breakfast program and any other services that we can provide to students to help them along their educational journey but also take some of the costs away.

It's something that I tabled a few years ago on school supplies, because it is something that - at this time of year when the weather gets colder and expenses start to build up as people move into the Fall - this is something else that is very tangible that we can take the cost away for students. The Strait area is doing it now. Some jurisdictions are doing it now. Some schools are stepping up. Parents are volunteering. They're providing support for free school supplies.

Again, this is something that the government can easily do. I know Community Services has just announced it through their program, but I think it can be stretched right across the province. My question is: . . .

BECKY DRUHAN: I appreciate the advocacy that the member opposite talks about, but I would observe that the member opposite was the Minister of Education, and the member opposite's advocacy didn't lead to programs for school lunch when he was in that desk. The advocacy at that time didn't lead to school supplies.

We are acting. We're not advocating. We're acting. That means we're going to be positioned in October to deliver lunches to students across the province - over 75,000 students. That's up to \$65 a week for all our students accessing the lunch program. That's going to be across the province to all students, and when we're done that, we'll be happy to look at school supplies.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RTA: RULES FOR LANDLORDS - ESTABLISH

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: In my office, we have many cases where landlords are trying to evict tenants so they can raise the rents. Last week, I got a call from a newcomer

family with six kids. They're paying \$1,500 for a three-bedroom. She's terrified of the eviction.

The landlord is saying that the kids are causing too much noise. Is this what the Premier just referred to as not good neighbours? The government is going to introduce clearer rules for tenants' behaviour. Will they also release clear rules for landlord behaviour so tenants can be protected?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Of course, we do not want to see anybody evicted. As I said on the floor of the Legislature before, if a tenant is served with a notice for an eviction by their landlord, they can apply to the program. It's there, it works, and it stops the clock on that eviction notice. That would be my advice to the member opposite.

That said, the legislation - and we'll have time to debate the legislation that's on the floor later this afternoon. It's about trying to strike a balance, and the provisions in the Act about tenant behaviour are also for the neighbours who are also tenants.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Just in addition, that family asked to be moved to the main floor so there is less noise, and the landlord said no, that they want them out so they can double the rent. That is the story that I brought to the House today.

Speaker, we have another case in my office where a senior is seeking help because she has been on the priority housing wait-list for a long time. Her case worker is not replying to her. Across Nova Scotia, we see resources stretched thin as the government struggles to deal with the number of Nova Scotians facing affordability challenges.

My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is: Will he add more caseworkers to help Nova Scotians?

HON. JOHN LOHR: The reality is we are working across the housing spectrum in many different ways to help people and there are many different success stories. I can give you a success story of someone on a home repair and adaptation program: Maureen MacPherson, 69 years old, lives in Antigonish. She applied to a home repair program to help with her roof, the home repair program for \$15,000. She said, "It may look like a small thing to you but it was a huge thing for me. I love the new windows and feel safer with my new water tank and roof."

Speaker, I say that to say that we are working across the housing spectrum. We are working on new public housing; we are working on affordable housing. We've made investments across the spectrum, and we will continue to do so. I'll table that.

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

FTB: BETTER PAY CHEQUE GUARANTEE - EXPLAIN

HON. BEN JESSOME: In 2021 one of the paramount campaign commitments from the Tories was a Better Pay Cheque Guarantee for Nova Scotians on Day 1. I can remember at the time coming back to that, getting calls from people across the province in a few different communities - I won't exaggerate, but a few different communities, not limited to my own - wondering how they were going to accomplish that.

Through you, Speaker, I am wondering if one of the ministers of the government can explain how the government intended to accomplish the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee that many Nova Scotians would have voted for and what happened that caused it to implode when they arrived in government.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I am happy to have the question because it gives me an opportunity to talk about the indexing of income tax brackets. Everyone working in this province will benefit from the indexing of tax brackets. It's something that many governments have talked about in the past, but few have delivered on - in fact, none have delivered on until this government. It will certainly become, over time, the largest tax break in the province's history.

BEN JESSOME: That happened sometime thereafter. What I am getting at is when the PC Party went to doors in 2021, they looked people in their eyes and said, "We're going to guarantee a better paycheque for you on Day 1." To me, that's not what was conceived at the time, and I wonder what happened.

Why did they get away from that paramount commitment that was right on the front page of that PC platform? That must have been the first wobbler that they introduced back in 2021. Our party, the Nova Scotia Liberal Party, has introduced solutions proposing free transit across the province. We presented an idea for a 2 per cent HST cut.

My question to the minister is: I'm wondering if the government will commit to a 2 per cent HST cut for Nova Scotians?

ALLAN MACMASTER: This government has been focused on fixing the health care system and we've said we're not afraid to spend the money to do it. We have been doing that, 36 per cent more in the health budget compared to the previous government. That's a significant increase.

We can't be giving out the kinds of tax relief the member is suggesting at a time when we're trying to fix the health care system, but we have made a commitment to index tax brackets. That cost is going to grow for government over time, but we believe it's something that's fair for Nova Scotians and we want them to see income tax relief.

THE SPEAKER: Order. I don't mind a little chirping but it's yelling across the floor.

The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

DOJ: STREET CHECKS - BAN

SUZY HANSEN: My question is for the Minister of Justice. In 2019 the Wortley Report on street checks found that African Nova Scotians were six times more likely to be stopped by the police. Finally, this past weekend the RCMP issued a historic apology for the discriminatory practice of street checks. Now it's time for this government to build on that momentum. Speaker, will the Minister of Justice stand today and commit to implementing a legislative ban on street checks?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Like many, I was at the apology on the weekend, and as Dennis Daley said, it was a long time coming - too long. Those who spoke about the impact of it resonated and said that the best apology was a change in behaviour.

I can reassure the member that with our new Department of Equity and Anti-Racism, as well as the policing review and the new policing standards that are coming out, there is an awful lot of action that is happening within the department to ensure that behaviour of policing across this province is better across all sections of policing in the province of Nova Scotia.

SUZY HANSEN: As folks in community have said, they wanted a ban on street checks and they wanted it legislated. We know right now we have a ministerial directive, and it is not law. Street checks still happen every day. Without a clear legislative embrace of change, we are doomed to repeat our past mistakes. We need concrete measures in place to ensure we continue to move forward in a way that respects historic injustices, as was spoken on Saturday.

After hearing from the community about the trauma and injustices of what street checks mean to them, on Saturday at the apology, why is the minister still not moving forward with a legislative ban on street checks?

BARBARA ADAMS: There are a number of initiatives under way, including the soon-to-be-released African Nova Scotian Justice Action Plan. There is also a comprehensive policing review that is under way. There are going to be a lot of actions that are going to be taken, but we are going to make sure that we get it right, instead of doing it right now. There is an awful lot that we're working on in terms of bringing forward changes that will be part of a comprehensive plan, including the African Nova Scotian Justice Action Plan and the Indigenous Justice Action Strategy.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

DPW: FREE TRANSIT FOR ALL - COMMIT

HON. TONY INCE: Just last weekend, the Premier touted free bus passes for students on their social media accounts, saying that his government is working to make life more affordable for families. I'll table that. Nova Scotians are asking, What about everyone else? As the cost of living continues to rise in Nova Scotia, will the Premier commit to making transit free for all Nova Scotians?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: We're always looking for ways to make life more affordable for Nova Scotians and to make transit more sustainable and better. Over the past three years, as the member would know, we established the Joint Regional Transportation Agency, which is looking at how we can move people more efficiently in their commute around Halifax, and we'll continue to do our work.

TONY INCE: The affordability crisis isn't limited to youth under 18 or families in HRM. It is being felt across the province. While there are big promises made to get elected, they are short on delivery. All promises, no progress. The Premier already admitted that free transit for students can help families. Why won't he make it free for everyone?

KIM MASLAND: Our focus has always been to make lives more affordable. My suggestion would be for the honourable member to pick up the phone, call his buddy in Ottawa, and let's talk about the carbon tax.

[3:00 p.m.]

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, would you please call Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 467.

Bill No. 467 - Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act (amended) and Residential Tenancies Act (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister for Service Nova Scotia.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I move that Bill No. 467, the Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act (amended) and the Residential Tenancies Act (amended), be now read for a second time.

Speaker, we all know that we're facing a tight housing market. When our government was elected in 2021, we made it clear that we did not support a rent cap. We didn't believe it was a permanent solution, and that's still the case.

What we need most is more choice for the 30 per cent of Nova Scotians who rent. We have a housing plan, and it's working. Housing starts are up, and our government's plan will create tens of thousands of new units. We are creating the conditions needed for more construction, and we're making historic investments in affordable housing.

While we do that, we need to protect Nova Scotians and to balance the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants the best we can. We are continuing the rent cap at 5 per cent until December 31, 2027. This will give peace of mind to Nova Scotians who are on a month-to-month episodic or periodic lease that they can predict what their rent increase will be from one year to the next.

We are also making changes to the Residential Tenancies Act to address problematic tenant behaviour, sublets, and eviction timelines for rental arrears. Nova Scotia currently has the longest rental arrear eviction timelines in the country. Right now, landlords must wait 15 days after a tenant's rent is late to file an eviction notice. The tenant then has another 15 days to either pay the rent or dispute the eviction notice. That means a landlord might have to wait a month or more before being able to file an eviction notice.

Speaker, that might be fine for a larger corporate landlord which has more units and has more cash coming in, but for a smaller landlord it can be devastating. While I recognize people tend to paint all landlords with the same brush, they really aren't the same. If a small landlord struggles with cash flow, they may choose to sell their properties. That means their tenants will no longer have a place to live, and our housing supply issue becomes even greater.

These changes will allow landlords to issue an eviction notice three full calendar days after rent hasn't been paid. After that, tenants will have ten calendar days to pay the rent or dispute the eviction notice.

This is one of those times where it's important for tenants to know their rights. If the tenant wants to dispute the eviction notice, they can apply to the Residential Tenancies

Program and stop the clock. Nothing more will happen until a hearing happens and a decision is made.

Another amendment will define the reasons why landlords can apply to the Residential Tenancies Program to end a tenancy for bad tenant behaviour. This change will not just help landlords but other tenants or neighbours too. Landlords will be able to apply to end a tenancy for bad behaviour for the following reasons: when a tenant repeatedly pays their rent late, when they cause extraordinary damage to the property, when they disturb the landlord or other occupants, or even when they engage in illegal activity.

I often talk about balance with the Residential Tenancies Program, and this is a good example of a change that will benefit both sides. For example, let's say you're a law-abiding person living in a building where a neighbouring tenant is selling drugs. Right now, it's hard for a landlord to evict the tenant who is committing a crime. Meanwhile, for the neighbour, their right to feel safe or to enjoy their own home and peace of mind is being violated. They may feel that there's no other option for them except to move, but we know that in today's tight market, that's not a simple solution. These changes clarify circumstances for when landlords can and can't end a tenancy so that they and their tenants and neighbours can continue to live in their homes with peace of mind.

These changes will take effect upon proclamation, which we're anticipating will happen in Winter 2025. This will allow time for the development of regulations to support the Act.

We're also clarifying that tenants can't sublet their unit for more rent than they're currently paying. That actually happens. This will protect those subtenants from being exploited and paying higher rent than the original tenant. This change protects not just the landlord but also the subtenant, who may be afraid to bring forward problems to the landlord or apply to the Residential Tenancies Program because they are not the one named on the lease. That change will take effect when this bill is passed.

There are also some smaller changes, including one that will allow us to publish director's orders against either tenants or landlords, in full or in part, at our discretion. This change will bring a new level of transparency to the Residential Tenancies Program that partners have been long asking for.

We are also creating a common anniversary date for land-lease communities to make landlord rules clear for all tenants in their community. This will make it easier and clearer for those tenants.

If there is one thing I've learned during my time in this portfolio, it's about the importance of understanding your rights and responsibilities. That's why we began a public education and awareness campaign in Fall 2021 for the Residential Tenancies Program.

Those have been successful. We will continue these campaigns to help ensure that Nova Scotians are armed with the information they need in today's rental market.

One final point I'd like to make is about what we're not doing in these amendments. We gave serious consideration to whether a compliance and enforcement unit for Residential Tenancies would help Nova Scotians resolve their issues in this rental market. As we all know, government commissioned a consultant's report to ask what would be needed if we created such a unit - not whether we should create such a unit. We did a careful review of how enforcement units are working across the country in other provinces. What we concluded is that a compliance and enforcement unit would create more bureaucracy and more red tape. It would not help Nova Scotians resolve their issues with either their tenants or their landlords any faster than the Residential Tenancies Program does.

In Ontario, for example, the compliance and enforcement unit has a wait between four and six months - not weeks, months. Right now, our average hearing wait time is 5.3 weeks. I want to commend the department for bringing that down from eight weeks this time last year. We triage hearings to make sure that emergency matters are heard more quickly than that.

The amendments before this House are designed to meet the objectives of a compliance and enforcement unit. We are making changes that will help resolve issues more efficiently. Our Residential Tenancies Program is simple and quick to access compared to the waits for many compliance enforcement units across the country, and we are making amendments that will strengthen the program further and make it better and easier and fairer for everyone.

The program is there to help, and it works. Our staff helps to mediate between landlords and tenants, and after hearing the issue, orders to identify the next steps that need to be taken.

In conclusion, Speaker, the high rents and struggles we are seeing in the rental market here in Nova Scotia and across the country are a challenge for many. They are a product of our low vacancy rate, and to fix that, we need to focus on housing supply. We need more places that Nova Scotians can choose from - choose where and how they want to live.

Our government has a strong, clear housing plan. We are making historic investments in affordable housing, in student housing, in supportive housing, and in public housing. We're seeing a record number of housing starts. We are creating the environment to incentivize and to build more housing in this province. We're removing the provincial portion of the HST on new builds, expanding the More Opportunities for Skilled Trades program, and rolling out skilled trades programs in our public schools. I could go on.

We'll continue to keep a close eye on our rental market. We'll continue to make the changes needed to protect tenants and landlords. Most importantly, we will continue to address and implement the solution to the housing crisis - that's more housing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: Thank you to the minister for those opening comments. This is important legislation - two pieces of legislation. I listened to the minister closely. I was at the press conference the minister had earlier last week to introduce these changes as well. The one thing that was not mentioned at all in the minister's opening comments there - the elephant in the room when it comes to the current rental situation in Nova Scotia - is the issue of fixed term leases. It was not mentioned once in the minister's opening comments. I hope that when he closes second reading, perhaps he will have any opportunity to explain the decision-making process as to why that issue is not being addressed here.

The fundamental problem that we have right now in Nova Scotia is that if you have a rent cap system and an unregulated fixed term lease system, those two things don't go together. They're like oil and water. They do not mix whatsoever.

If you think about it, if you have a 5 per cent rent cap, which I will come to later - I don't know where that number exactly comes from - yet rents year over year for the past several years are going up 10 per cent plus or 15 per cent plus, something is out of whack. The something that is out of whack is that we have fixed term leases that end, and then landlords have an obvious incentive - to use the word the minister mentioned - there is an overriding financial incentive.

If someone is renting a three-bedroom apartment - for example, a constituent of mine in a three-bedroom apartment on Larry Uteck Boulevard for \$1,795, which they have been in since 2017, I believe. If that unit came on the market today, it would be \$2,800, \$2,900, or \$3,000 easily. There was a small kitchen fire in that tenant's unit 13 months ago. That tenant and his wife have been out of the unit since then, trying to accommodate themselves at their own expense. They're going through the residential tenancies process. There has been a hearing in their favour. The landlord has appealed to Small Claims Court. At this point in time, there is no timeline for when they're going to be able to return home. We're looking at 14 months at least.

I know the minister said at the beginning that the government doesn't believe in a permanent rent control system, and I think that's a defensible position. We can argue about that one way or another. I don't think that's necessarily wrong, but to have a rent cap system with no changes to fixed term leases doesn't make sense. It causes a great deal of problems.

If you look to other provinces, there are five provinces other than Nova Scotia that have some form of a rent cap or rent control system. What they all do is have a system

where there is not a fixed term lease - “loophole” isn’t even the right word. It’s a chasm. It’s a canyon.

What we have proposed in our Liberal caucus is what they have in British Columbia, which is where at the end of a fixed term lease, the lease converts to month-to-month. If both parties agree to end the fixed term lease, it ends. In many cases, that would happen here in Nova Scotia too. If you’re a student who’s here for eight months, if you’re a travel nurse, if you’re somebody here on a construction job, or if you’re a consultant here - whatever the case might be - you might need a fixed term lease. I don’t dispute that. I’m not saying they should not exist, but for the many Nova Scotians who find themselves in fixed term leases - often without even knowing that they have signed a fixed term lease - there has to be some degree of protection. That is common knowledge, I would say, in other provinces, and it befuddles me as to why we are not doing the same here in Nova Scotia. It’s an obvious problem.

[3:15 p.m.]

Another issue is that we don’t know how big a problem it is. All we have are anecdotes, stories, perceptions, and feelings, because we also don’t have effective data for rental registries. I would love to know, since 2021, what proportion of leases signed in Nova Scotia are fixed term leases, and how does that compare to the three years prior? We just don’t know. I think that is something the department and the government should seriously look at, because if we don’t have good data, we’re all just grasping at straws to one degree or another. That’s not how good policy is made. I think that’s another major gap here in our knowledge base on fixed term leases. All in all, I think that’s by far the biggest issue we see with this bill, and with the complete disregard that this is a massive problem in our rental market that has not been closed or solved by this legislation at all.

You all remember, probably when you were at school - I found this was in math class a lot - I know, segue - the teacher would scrawl at the top, “Show your work,” right? Don’t just give me the answer, show the work. Frustrating thing to read, but I also want the government to show their work on this bill.

We have two pieces of the Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act, and I don’t know where either of them comes from. There is a deadline that has been extended to December 31, 2027. Why? Was that name plucked out of the hat we voted for Speaker in? I don’t know. It seems arbitrary. It seems random. Again, the minister and the department have given no explanation as to why that is. We all hope that the housing situation is much better in a little over two years. Maybe it’s not and we just keep punting the football down the field, and that’s not a way to make good policy, either. That’s one piece.

The thing that’s more important to show your work on is the maximum allowable increase. It’s 5 per cent right now, it’s 5 per cent next year, it’s 5 per cent for 2027 as well, and I don’t know why. There is no explanation as to where that number came from. Other

provinces that have a rent cap system have formulas that inform where the number comes from and, in most cases, some combination of inflation and the cost of a basket of goods, and so on, and it makes sense. We have legislation again on that, and I believe my colleagues in the NDP do as well, that makes sense to get to a number.

I took a look for next year, 2025. The other provinces that have a rent cap or rent control system in place, this is what their rental increases look like: New Brunswick is the highest other than Nova Scotia at 4.7 per cent, although tenants in New Brunswick have the ability to apply for a gradual phase-in of that 4.7 per cent over the course of the year; the next highest is British Columbia - 3 per cent; Ontario - 2.5 per cent; P.E.I. - 2.3 per cent; and Manitoba - 1.7 per cent.

This is not a list I think you want to be number one on, but it's a list that we are number one on. Every other province that has a rent cap or rent control system shows their work and justifies the rental increase that they are asking the hundreds of thousands or millions of people in their province who are renters to pay. I think that is a baseline level of rigour that our departments in our government should exercise, and I don't see that in this case. We all know that we have an ongoing housing crisis in Nova Scotia. We have huge increases in rents. Depending on where you are in Nova Scotia, you are looking at 1 per cent or less vacancy rates, so it is impossible to find another apartment if you have to.

This bill has huge gaps. This government has huge gaps when it comes to, in particular, the issue of fixed term leases, which has had nothing done for the past three years, and it's causing tremendous pain, suffering, misery, and anxiety in Nova Scotia, and second of all, the issue of evidence - showing your work and explaining why a 5 per cent rental increase year over year is justified.

I hope the minister and other members of the government can answer those questions. Those are the major issues that I wanted to raise here in second reading.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, I'm glad for the opportunity to outline, at this second reading stage of the game, our party's response to the changes in the Rent Cap Act and the Residential Tenancies Act as they're contained in Bill No. 459.

As I see it, the crisis in rental housing in Nova Scotia at the moment has three primary components that are within the capacity of the government to solve immediately:

- 1) the temporariness of the rent cap, leading to all manner of instability and insecurity in the world of rental housing;
- 2) the exclusion of new tenancies from the rent cap, limiting the overall effectiveness of the cap and providing an incentive to landlords to conclude tenancies and evict tenants so as to get around the cap; and

- 3) the ubiquity of fixed term leases, which provide landlords with a broad means of concluding tenancies and evicting tenants, thereby undermining the security of tenure provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act and undercutting the purpose of the cap.

What we have in Bill No. 459, I want to suggest, is a measure that addresses just part of Problem 1 of these three, while if anything, by its expediting evictions, making Problems 2 and 3 worse than they were before.

So let's begin with Problem 1, the temporariness of the rent cap. Here we are with Rent Cap 4, the fourth iteration of a short-term - 16-, 18-, 24-, 30-month - establishment or extension of a rent cap by a Progressive Conservative Party, and previously a Liberal Party, both of which have long expressed themselves as having deep philosophical reservations about the principle of rent control, with the result that presently in Nova Scotia, the whole matter of rents and the future of rents remains an object of anxiety, insecurity, and worry for the hundreds of thousands of people in our province who rent their homes.

This is not to say that the extension of the cap in this bill is not welcome news. It is welcome news. It is an important moment for us to express admiration for those organizations like ACORN and Dalhousie Legal Aid that have consistently pressured the government to do what they have never wanted to do - that is, remove rents, even temporarily, from the unregulated power of the market.

This is, however, to say that there are so many problems that a merely temporary rent cap cannot solve - problems that can be helpfully and constructively dealt with in a system of permanent rent control, such as the one we in the NDP have been advocating for since we first submitted our Rental Fairness and Affordability Act here quite a number of years ago. A system of permanent rent control is just that. It is not random and not, in the words of the previous speaker, arbitrary. It is a system. That is what a temporary rent cap cannot aspire to be.

For example, in the NDP-governed provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, where the permitted maximum rent increases this year are 1.7 and 3.5 per cent respectively, those numbers are - again, to use a phrase of the previous speaker, in a way that shows the work. They're derived by a formula. In the acceptance of rent control in those provinces, that formula is placed before the public and embedded in regulations and in legislation.

By contrast, where in fact does Nova Scotia's 5 per cent come from? Does the minister know? The minister has provided no indication that he has any sense of the logic of the derivation of that number. Does the Premier know? The Premier has provided no indication that he has any awareness of the logic of the derivation or the derivation of where that 5 per cent comes from.

So not only is this 5 per cent in this legislation the highest permitted ceiling of any rent cap in Canada, it also has the terrible deficiency that it is, in fact, arbitrary. That is to say, it is random, it is without foundation, and it is capricious. A permanent rent control system, such as what we had in Nova Scotia until the mid-1990s - and I'm old enough to remember doing advocacy under that system and, in fact, remember how well it worked, a permanent rent control system, such as we had here and lost in the mid-1990s, and such as is the NDP's proposal, is a system - not an arbitrary invention, not a number pulled out of the sky. It is, in fact, a system which provides people, as systems do, with the predictability they need, predictability in the world of rents and housing.

Predictability is one awfully important consideration. We can think about how this is true, just to our own lives and the lives of people we know, from many different points of view. I'll put forward one: Consider the person - this is a type of person very common in our province - who is an older person and owns their own home. Let's say they are single and that they are considering the possible option of downsizing to an apartment.

Now while there's no system of permanent rent control, that person can have no confidence of what that future apartment cost is apt to be, whereas in their home, even though it might be a lot larger and more expensive than they want to be in, there is in their home a certain stability in the costs they are going to have in the years coming up before them.

In any case, that person - and there are a lot of them - is not in a position to put their whole housing life and their whole financial life under a question mark by downsizing in a rental market where the current rent cap may be renewed or it may not be renewed, this year or in two years or in three years' time, potentially opening the door to the Wild West of exponential rent increases that was the case before the Liberals were publicly pressured to bring in Rent Cap 1 in 2020.

It is not simply tenants who would be better off with a permanent rent control system. I speak with a lot of landlords. There are quite a number of neighbourhoods in Halifax Chebucto where there are more resident landlords than there are resident tenants. As I visit door to door in the constituency I serve and speak about these subjects, I have all kinds of opportunities to talk with landlords, especially smaller landlords, about their frustrations with costs that continue to inflate insurance, taxes, maintenance and so on while they are capped in the price they can charge to rent their asset.

Landlords are often surprised and pleased and want to hear more when they learn that it is only under the temporary concern of the previous Liberal rent caps that there's no recourse for them in this situation, whereas under the system we had previously in Nova Scotia and under the system we in the NDP are proposing, for a permanent rent control system, they would have the opportunity to be provided with an avenue to present extraordinary expenses and apply for a cap exemption. That's Problem 1: the temporariness

and therefore the random, unpredictable arbitrariness of the rent cap which the government's current measure with its two-year extension, only partially addresses.

I want to speak some about Problem 2 in the current rental housing crisis in the province, which the government has the capacity to move on immediately, if it so chooses - that is the limitedness of the rent cap to current, present tenancies and the exclusion of the rent cap of new tenancies from its provisions.

[3:30 p.m.]

This current iteration of the temporary rent cap, Rent Cap 4, has this same exact provision as its predecessor and its predecessor before that, and this is at the root of the fact that the current rent cap is a failure at the only thing that rent caps are supposed to do and that is cap the rent. A rent cap surely can't be a successful program if rent increases are not even within sight of the rent cap. That is exactly the situation we have at the moment, as was made so clear a few weeks ago in the rentals.ca report that I tabled earlier this afternoon, which outlined how average rent increased last year to \$2,378, or an increase of 18 per cent. Those are the August numbers from rentals.ca, which are 13 percentage points greater than the rent cap.

A reasonable person, looking at a 5 per cent rent cap and an 18 per cent rent increase, could reasonably ask: How could a rent cap possibly fail that completely? It didn't go up to 6.5 per cent. It didn't go up to 7.25 per cent. It didn't even stay in the single digits. It went from over 5 per cent - 5 per cent of the cap - to 18 per cent.

In fact, the answer to this question is that this rent cap is designed to fail, because it is so defined as to exclude all new tenancies. The effect of this is that the more tenancy conversion landlords can achieve, the more of their properties are excluded from the cap. That is to say, the current rent cap is a failure because landlords are able to circumvent it if they are able to move out their tenants, which they do in significant numbers by the growing prevalence in Nova Scotia of eviction.

Here we come to the real problem: The way that eviction - the violent displacement, one author called it, of eviction - is, in fact, incentivized by the way the rent cap is presently set up. A recent study out of the University of British Columbia demonstrated - I'll table it - that Nova Scotia has the highest rate of evictions of any province in the country, with the sole exception of B.C.

A more recent study, released just last week here in the city by ACORN, showed that 36 per cent of surveyed tenants had already - somewhere else, previously - been evicted. That's an interesting figure, because it compares to the situation just three years ago, when only 6 per cent of tenants reported having previously been evicted - so, in three years, from 6 per cent of tenants who had been previously evicted to 36 per cent. The same study clearly relates the prevalence of evictions to the exponential rise in rents. Of tenants

who have been forced to move in the last five years in our province, 85 per cent reported that they'd had to pay more for their new place than for their old one.

I want to be sure to note here also that, although the government does in fact powerfully incentivize landlords to evict their tenants under the current system, there are - and I want to carefully note this - there are many landlords who refuse to do this. There are many landlords who refuse to respond by evicting their tenants to the pressures and incentives that are placed on them by the "maldesign" of the rent-cap system as we have it.

There are many landlords who appreciate the care and the quality of their tenants - the care of their properties and the quality of their relationships with them - often over many long periods, and who, when they look at the financial pressures they're under, examine the financial incentives that the government is giving them to evict their tenants and get new tenants who will not be affected by the rent cap but nevertheless have a moral sense that causes them to refuse to take part in the great property owners' push to put people on the street.

I want to put before the House that I have met and spoken with many such landlords. I think that their sense of reciprocity and their sense of fairness is something that should be noted and respected here and uplifted.

I have spoken about Problem 1 of the current rental crisis - the temporariness of the rent cap - and Problem 2, the fact that the rent cap excludes new tenancies. This brings me to the third problem in the rental crisis, which, if the government wanted to, it could immediately solve: that is the ubiquity and the across-the-boardness of the misuse of fixed term leases.

I want to say this carefully. The minister's hollow discourse about how fixed term leases have their place, et cetera, flies in the face of every evidence that the across-the-board use of fixed term leases is by far the main means by which landlords are evicting - turning over their units - and thereby doing the raising of their rents beyond the 5 per cent.

The ACORN study I was just mentioning - it's called *Understanding Fixed Term Lease Use in Nova Scotia* - is definitive about this. The study found that when tenants were asked why they signed their fixed term lease, over 99 per cent - if that's not ubiquitous, I don't know what is; if that's not across the board, I don't know what is - over 99 per cent responded that a fixed term lease was the only form of lease that that landlord had presented and put before them.

I think it's important for the government to hear some of the narrative responses in that survey that people provided. Here is one:

The last time I moved, the only affordable option I could find was a fixed term lease. Now I've just learned that they will not be renewing my lease so that they can raise the rent. There have been no renovations at all to justify this increase. I moved here because it was all I could afford, and now a year later, I'm forced to move again when all my options are even more expensive than before. What's happening in this province is simply unjust.

Here's another, "In 11 years, I've lived in 10 different apartments. Every time I've moved, it's because I've been renocted or evicted on a fixed term lease."

Here's a third:

Our landlords decided not to reoffer our fixed term lease after we lived there for years. They said we were great tenants, but they just needed to raise the rent. We had to secure a new place with a three-month probationary fixed term lease that is wildly more expensive, but we still accepted it because we don't have much choice. I had to increase my hours at work and take on a second job just to make ends meet.

It is, in my view, an incompetent and mean-spirited dereliction of responsibility on the government's part to bring forward amendments to the Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act and the Residential Tenancies Act without addressing whatsoever these harmful deficiencies - these hurtful deficiencies - with the present set-up, by which both the financial security and the housing security of hundreds of thousands of people in our province are being so severely and seriously undermined.

It is true, Speaker, that the bill before us overlooks the glaring deficiencies of the exclusion of new tenancies from the rent cap, and it overlooks the ubiquity of fixed term leases, but it's also true - quite shockingly - that at the same time this bill also exacerbates and intensifies those same weaknesses and deficiencies by, of all things, facilitating evictions in Nova Scotia. What a bizarre and ill-chosen moment for the government to legislate to make it quicker and easier for landlords to evict their tenants. The HRM is literally unable to expand the designated homeless encampment sites quickly enough to contain the numbers of those daily being made newly homeless by the wide range of means by which landlords are already evicting now.

Someone said to me this should be called the "More evictions, faster" bill. That's about the size of it. One struggles - always when we are in the position of a contention, one of the things we try to do is to put ourselves in the position and understand the thinking of the group or the person whom we're contending and disagreeing with. One genuinely struggles to figure out where a person would have to be in their thinking, in Fall 2024, that

they would look at the housing crisis in Nova Scotia and say: Oh, I have an idea. I know what to do. Here's the thing that will take us forward. Let's facilitate evictions.

We try to say: What frame of mind would you be in to come to this conclusion? I think a person could only see the present moment as a good moment to address the housing crisis by facilitating evictions if, in fact, (a) they were at an awful remove and a great personal distance from the realities of the present housing crisis, and (b) if they simply had no real notion, no real knowledge, no real sense, of what terrible things evictions really are.

If they had ever just been around the life-unravelling and sickening feeling that comes over anyone who reads the letter at the front door that gives that date on which the landlord is demanding you be elsewhere and then has to face the endless uncertainty - the plans to change the kids' schools, the family's pictures packed away in some friend's half-damp basement, and overall the depression and the despair that the word "eviction" really in real life actually means. There's an important study called *Evicted* by an author named Matthew Desmond where he gives an important exploration of this reality. The book explores through extensive interviews the detailed circumstances of what people go through when they're actually evicted. It concludes with an epilogue that has the title "Home and Hope." I'd like to read a couple of short passages from "Home and Hope." Desmond writes this:

Then there is the toll eviction takes on a person's spirit. The violence of displacement can drive people to depression and, in extreme cases, even suicide. One in two recently evicted mothers reports multiple symptoms of clinical depression, double the rate of similar mothers who were not forced from their homes. Even after years pass, evicted mothers are less happy, energetic, and optimistic than their peers. When several patients committed suicide in the days leading up to their eviction, a group of psychiatrists published a letter in the journal *Psychiatric Services* identifying eviction as a "significant precursor of suicide." The letter emphasized that none of the patients were facing actual homelessness, leading the psychiatrists to attribute the suicides to eviction itself. "Eviction must be considered a traumatic rejection," they wrote, "a denial of one's most basic human needs, and an exquisitely shameful experience." Suicides attributed to evictions and foreclosures doubled between 2005 and 2010, years when housing costs soared.

I want to read one other paragraph from the study *Evicted*. Desmond writes:

Losing your home and possessions and often your job; being stamped with an eviction record and denied government housing assistance; relocating to degrading housing in poor and dangerous neighbourhoods; and suffering from increased material hardship,

homelessness, depression, and illness - this is eviction's fallout. Eviction does not simply drop poor families into a dark valley, a trying yet relatively brief detour on life's journey. It fundamentally redirects their way, casting them onto a different, and much more difficult, path.

I can hear the government say, No, we're talking here about expediting evictions for people who didn't pay their rent. Speaker, I want to submit in this debate that there are many sound reasons why people cannot pay their rent. There are many sound reasons why people cannot pay their rent within three business days of the day that it is due. How many examples we could bring forward from our experience. I want to just bring forward one.

Let us think about a senior couple who are on their own in the world. One member of the senior couple handles the finances. The other one is not able to do that. At the very end of the month, the member of the couple who handles the finances has a stroke. Let's say this is on a Friday. They're in the hospital. They don't have a cellphone, they're not able, in fact, to speak to anybody until the social worker in the hospital is able to get to them, and that's not going to be Monday. It's not going to be on a weekend. It's not apt to be Tuesday. It's probably going to be Wednesday, maybe even Thursday.

Don't let anybody suggest that this would be a rare occurrence. There is not a hospital in Nova Scotia where this doesn't happen every single week. This happens in our hospitals every day. This bill says it's all right for the landlord to serve that couple with an eviction notice before that cheque gets in. It makes no difference, I don't think, that there are provisions for that tenant to make this or that response once they get the notice. The fact is that before that bill is passed, under the current regime, that landlord may not legally send that senior in the hospital who's had a stroke that letter until 15 days.

Once this bill becomes passed and becomes law, that letter will be legal for that senior to receive in that hospital after three business days. Thank you so much to all the Conservative Progressives. The document distributed by the government for the briefing of this bill last Friday said this: "The Act requires amendments to establish a greater balance between tenants and landlords." When I read this, I immediately felt like responding, amendments to establish a greater what?

This minister ought to be openly scoffed at every time in the future he publicly pronounces the word "balanced" after offering as his primary manifestation of this important principle nothing more than a smoother path for landlords to put their people on the street.

None of this is to say that we don't have an eviction problem. We do have an eviction problem. We have a very serious eviction problem. It has a whole variety of components. We have a serious eviction problem with landlords evicting tenants under the provisions that permit this in cases where the property is needed for family. Then it turns

out that when the unit is rented, it's not to family at all but at a markedly increased rent to just some other tenant, which the former tenant is enraged to hear about and find out about on Kijiji, but they've already moved on. They're not necessarily wanting to enter into a whole residential tenancies case against the former landlord, whom they're glad to see in the rearview mirror. Many members of this House would know of situations of this sort. I certainly know of several. This serious eviction problem is entirely unaddressed - not one word in this "More evictions, faster" bill.

[3:45 p.m.]

We have a very serious eviction problem with seniors being renovicted, having no place to go, applying to seniors housing, and facing a multi-year wait-list. In Quebec, such people may not be evicted until the day their name comes up on the seniors housing list. We in the Halifax Chebucto NDP have been going door to door for a year and a half with a petition to adopt the Quebec provision here in Nova Scotia. People are almost universally pleased to sign this petition because they are morally offended by the numbers of seniors forced to live in their cars in the Walmart parking lot in Nova Scotia. The "More evictions, faster" bill doesn't do anything at all about this.

We have a very serious eviction problem with renovation in general. It's neither here nor there that there may not be this or that many formal residential tenancies appeals and hearings on these renovations, as the minister sometimes answers. The truth is, in real life, that the vast majority of people go into moving mode the day they get the renovation letter, whatever the formal legal standing of that document. It's a letter that fills people immediately with such sadness that often they've lost the heart anyway to stay there any longer. It's a big eviction problem but not a word about it here in the "More evictions, faster" bill.

We've got a big problem with pet evictions - landlords declaring no-pet policies in buildings in hopes of getting tenants with pets to leave and thereby re-rent the units outside of the provisions of the rent cap. I was surprised to get an envelope in the mail recently from a group in the Valley who had become aware of the NDP's Family Pet Renter Protection Act prohibiting pet evictions and who'd gathered 150 signatures in support of the measure. I forwarded them to the minister's attention. The "More evictions, faster" bill doesn't touch on this at all, nor, as I explained previously, does the bill do anything about the epidemic of fixed term lease evictions that has entirely undermined the provisions of security of tenure in the Act, which it is the government's responsibility to uphold.

No, all we have in this bill is the expediting - the removal of administrative barriers - and the facilitating of eviction. I find the enterprise of this legislation mean. I find it unbalanced and one-sided. I find it hurtful. I find it sad to think that after three years of working with this problem, this is the best that the government can do.

THE SPEAKER: If I am to recognize the honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia, it will be to close debate on second reading.

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Lots to digest there, and I appreciate the feedback from members opposite.

A little bit on data that the member for Bedford South spoke about: I do want to commend the department - which is also working with my other department, Cyber Security and Digital Solutions - for their modernization efforts on the new landlord and tenant information system, which is on the inside of the changes that we're doing within the department and will help improve data collection. We do not have a rental registry. In case the members opposite are wondering, we're not looking to do that. Again, we believe that we'll have more data through that modernized system. Also, the triaging of cases - of hearings - is already taking place. That will be streamlined through this new landlord and tenant information system to make it better and fairer for tenants and landlords.

Speaker, I've spoken at length before. I said it at the bill briefings, I said it today in my opening remarks, and I said it in the last session and in the session before: We do not believe in a rent cap. We do not believe that is a permanent solution. I know members opposite have strong feelings about that.

We believe that we need to get to a spot where the free market can regulate itself, the price of housing. That said, Speaker, we are working hard and it is across government. I know, Minister, your colleagues have talked about this, that it's not just a one-department issue here. There are so many departments involved in tackling the housing crisis in this province. It goes hand in hand with affordability.

Whether it be the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, whether it be Community Services, whether it be the Department of Public Works and how we get people and goods and services in the city and across the province, the fact is - and the members opposite talked about doing our work - not one member opposite talked about the work that we're doing to actually address the housing crisis in the province.

We can all agree that there's a housing crisis in this province, but not one member opposite talked about what we need to fix the housing crisis, and that's more housing. Every time we get up on this side of the Legislature and talk about our initiatives, guess what? As the Premier indicated today, the NDP sat on millions of dollars, turned a blind eye. The government before us - the Liberals - saw this challenge coming and didn't do anything about it. Guess what? We are the government that is taking this head-on.

We can go blue in the face or red in the face or be orange in the face, but the fact is we are making historical investments, investments that we haven't seen in this province in

a long time. I wish that past governments would have done it. The fact is that we are getting it done.

There's a lot more to be said. I'll have more time to speak on these amendments. With that, I move to close second reading on Bill No. 467.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 467.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private and Local Bills for Second Reading.

PRIVATE AND LOCAL BILLS FOR SECOND READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Would you please call Bill No. 469.

Bill No. 469 - An Act to Incorporate the Trustees of the Hunter Church Building Fund (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, I move that Bill No. 469, An Act to Amend Chapter 81 of the Acts of 1876, An Act to Incorporate the Trustees of the Hunter Church Building Fund, be read a second time.

I have been asked by the Secretary of the Board, on behalf of the trustees of the Hunter Church Building Fund, to present this private and local bill. This is basically a housekeeping amendment. Proposed changes are not substantial, and they would tidy up some historical language issues.

Now I'll pass it over to my honourable colleagues across the floor if they have any comments to add.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Just to say, Speaker, that the Hunter Fund has a marvellous record over many generations, particularly in its support of the rural church in Nova Scotia. It has directed its assets towards the infrastructure of rural churches, both sanctuaries and halls and manses, for a long time and made the financial lives of many congregations, which would otherwise have not been financially tenable, tenable over an extended period. Anything that is a support or request that comes from the Hunter Church Building Fund is something that the House should look at favourably and we certainly would be happy to do that.

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

The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Thank you, Speaker, and I thank my honourable colleague across the aisle for his kind comments and certainly very important when we are recognizing our rural churches across our province.

With those few comments, I move to close second reading of Bill No. 469.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 469.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee of Private and Local Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, that concludes government business for the day.

I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Wednesday, September 11th between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Since tomorrow is Opposition Day, I will turn the floor over to my honourable colleague to call Opposition Business of the day.

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

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Deputy House Leader, but that's okay. For tomorrow, Opposition bills will be Bill No. 460, the Free Public Transit Act; Bill No. 472, the Seniors Care Grant Improvement Act; and Bill No. 465, the HST Reduction Act.

As late debate is the topic of the New Democratic Party, we will defer to them as to that, and that is all she wrote.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, I just want to make a correction. I called hours tomorrow of 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. They are actually 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. My apologies.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 3:58 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1,126**

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

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

Whereas marriages are an occasion for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the life of two individuals united as one; and

Whereas it was once said that a marriage is the celebration of love, trust, and partnership; and

Whereas on September 7th, 2024, a very special occasion took place when Jeff Murray and Nicole Nowe of Queens County celebrated their wedding;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jeff and Nicole on their marriage and wish them a lifetime of health and happiness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,127

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Adam Spires for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,128

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Alfred, Sam, and Max Bragg for their community spirit and for volunteering their time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,129

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through

the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Ben, Rory, Jack, and Paul Britton for their community spirit and for volunteering their time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,130

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Dwayne Dunphy for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,131

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Glenn Sutherland for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,132

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Greg Thistle for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,133

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Heinz Gaube for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,134

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking John McIsaac for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,135

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Keegan Wilson for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,136

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through

the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Keith, Melissa, and Emerson Kenny for their community spirit and for volunteering their time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,137

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Klaus Pollman for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,138

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Maggie and David Richards for their community spirit and for volunteering their time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,139

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Matt and Shari Mattie for their community spirit and for volunteering their time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,140

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Mitchell Bell for his community spirit and for volunteering his time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,141

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Damon and Lucas Parachnowitsch for their community spirit and for volunteering their time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,142

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Sam and Noah Villafane for their community spirit and for volunteering their time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,143

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas last year's devastating wildfires on the periphery of our riding serve as a stark reminder of the effects of climate change and the importance of following the burn ban regulations and working together to mitigate potential fire hazards; and

Whereas the residents in the Lake of the Woods (LOW) and Cambrian's Cove Subdivisions in Hubley organized a joint Community Wildfire Preparedness Day through the support of FireSmart Canada as we entered the peak season of wildfires, extreme heat, and dry weather conditions; and

Whereas the goal of the community was to remove the wildfire fuel (dead trees, brush, and debris) to reduce the risk of fire, and to take proactive initiatives in protecting lives and properties;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Roberto, Molloy and Kristina Whiffen for their community spirit and for volunteering their time to prevent wildfires and enhance the neighbourhood with a great beautification project.