



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain**

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### First Session

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021**

**Sixty-fourth General Assembly**

**First Session**

**1:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Keith Bain

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Angela Simmonds, Lisa Lachance

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The topic for late debate at the moment of interruption this evening has been forwarded by the honourable member for Sydney-Membertou:

Whereas the Nova Scotia government is committed to phasing out coal by 2030 and it is crucial that workers in communities are at the heart of the transition with training, skills development, jobs in renewable energy, and opportunities in the green economy.

Therefore be it resolved the government will focus on equity by ensuring communities that have traditionally been left out of the energy transition have the opportunity for skills training and new careers and jobs in the green economy.

Submitted by the honourable member for Sydney-Membertou at the moment of interruption.

Moving on to the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

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

LARRY HARRISON: I beg leave to table a petition from residents of East Stewiacke, approximately 90 signatures. The operative clause reads:

“We the undersigned residents, request that the Government of Nova Scotia, and in particular, the Department of Highways NS, commit to the residents of the Stewiacke East area that they will review much needed roadwork this fall, prioritize and allocate budget dollars for work completion in the spring/summer of 2022, for the **Cloverdale roadway from the corner of Alton Road, heading East towards Middle Stewiacke** to where the paving presently ends just beyond the Bates Rd and that gravelling and repair work where needed, continue beyond this point.”

I have affixed my signature to this petition, 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. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Committee of Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 68 - Executive Council Act (amended) and Public Service Act (amended).**

**Bill No. 71 - Tourism Nova Scotia Dissolution Act.**

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, 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 Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I'd like to table this document.



On a previous day in the House, the minister was asked about tabling the number of accessible buildings and houses to do with his portfolio. On behalf of the minister, I'd like to table that today.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

## STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Gaelic Affairs.

### RESOLUTION NO. 52

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

Whereas Mickey MacNeil of Jamesville, Victoria County, is a cherished native Gaelic-speaking elder and tradition bearer whose fascinating and entertaining Gaelic story *Luran and the Mermaid* was recently published in both Gaelic and English by Bradan Press in Dartmouth; and

Whereas fellow Gaels Dr. Shamus MacDonald, friend and apprentice to Mickey, and Ms. Emily MacDonald, illustrator and artist, contributed via Gaelic editing and graphic illustration of Mickey's story; and

Whereas the publication of Mickey's story provides a valuable resource to Gaelic-language speakers and learners and offers a keen insight into the cultural arts and expression and world view of the province's Gaels;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Mickey MacNeil, Dr. Shamus MacDonald, Emily MacDonald, and Bradan Press on their collective work to share Nova Scotia's rich Gaelic language and culture with the Gaelic community in the province and beyond.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 53**

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

Whereas the foster care program is the backbone of Nova Scotia's child welfare system; and

Whereas the Province has made small improvements to the program but there is much more to do to create an enhanced system where children in care and foster families receive the supports they need; and

Whereas Nova Scotia looks to implement a new model for the province's foster care system that will include culturally relevant programs and placements and maintain and attract new foster families to accept children into their homes;

Therefore be it resolved that the redesign of the foster care program will provide better outcomes for children in the care of the Province, where foster families and children of diverse backgrounds will get the support they need to flourish.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Gaelic Affairs.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 54**

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

Whereas Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide, an independent Gaelic-immersion school in Mabou, is the very first school through the medium of Gaelic to be established in North America; and

Whereas project team members Kenneth MacKenzie, Joanne MacIntyre, A.J. Fraser, Dr. Shamus MacDonald, Carmen MacArthur, and Kieran Walker diligently worked to plan, fundraise, and promote the opening of Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide in September 2021; and

Whereas an independent Gaelic-immersion school will provide an opportunity for school-age children in the Mabou catchment area to learn through immersion in the language of the Gaels in Nova Scotia and their cultural arts and expression;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly recognize and commend and congratulate Kenneth, Joanne, A.J., Dr. Shamus, Carmen, and Kieran on all their work, dedication, and commitment in bringing this historic Gaelic language and cultural development in the province to fruition.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Advanced Education.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 55**

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia Community College provides students with industry-driven training for today and tomorrow's workforce through its 14 campuses across the province; and

Whereas NSCC teaches nearly 20,000 students each year and has a graduate success story whereby 94 per cent of those NSCC graduates live and work right here in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas NSCC is celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> year since the Nova Scotia Community Colleges Act was proclaimed;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House congratulate the Nova Scotia Community College on a successful 25 years as we all look forward to seeing what they will accomplish over the next 25 years.

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

[1:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 56**

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

Whereas generations of young Nova Scotians have benefited from learning self confidence and practising a wide variety of life skills through the many opportunities offered by the 4-H program; and

Whereas the birthplace of 4-H in Nova Scotia is Heatherton, Antigonish County, which will celebrate 100 years of 4-H in 2022; and

Whereas today, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, is 4-H Show Your Colours Day, when thousands of youth, volunteers, alumni, and supporters from coast to coast wear green;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly celebrate the month of November as 4-H Month and acknowledge the program's important role in creating the agricultural, business, government, and civic leaders of the future.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Public Works.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 57**

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

Whereas the Department of Public Works makes every effort to ensure our roads are safe for all road users; and

Whereas although Nova Scotians have enjoyed unseasonably warm weather this Fall, Winter is coming; and

Whereas our staff and Winter maintenance equipment are ready to go to keep our roads safe to drive this Winter - the province has over 400 pieces of snow- and ice-clearing equipment and during storms they run 24/7 until the roads are clear;

Therefore be it resolved that now is the time for Nova Scotians to prepare for safe Winter driving. This includes installing Winter tires, checking road conditions before you head out, driving to conditions, slowing down, and leaving extra space between your vehicle and the one in front of you.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 78 - Entitled an Act to Amend Schedule A of Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2018, the Education Act, and Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Education (CSAP) Act, Respecting a Mental Health Curriculum. (Hon. Patricia Arab)**

**Bill No. 79 - Entitled an Act to Establish Nova Scotia Recovery Bonds. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)**

**Bill No. 80 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 197 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Health Services and Insurance Act, Respecting Free Birth Control. (Claudia Chender)**

**Bill No. 81 - Entitled an Act Respecting Free Menstrual Products. (Claudia Chender)**

**Bill No. 82 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, Respecting Bereavement Leave for Pregnancy Loss. (Lorelei Nicoll)**

**Bill No. 83 - Entitled an Act to Ensure the Safety and Readiness of New Schools. (Hon. Brendan Maguire)**

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 Argyle.

**EAST PUBNICO RESIDENTS:  
PUMPKINVILLE CELEBRATION - CONGRATS.**

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the community of East Pubnico on its very first Pumpkinville.

In true community spirit, residents came together to create an impressive assortment of pumpkin-people displays, from a pumpkin fisherman hauling aboard a pumpkin mermaid, to a Cruella Deville with some of her pumpkin puppies, to a Dr. Strang pumpkin person, and many more. Several categories for the judges included Most Comical, Community Spirit, Biggest Display, and Most Creative. To add to the festivities, on October 17<sup>th</sup>, the community also held a craft market and chili takeout at the local Community Centre.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating the residents of East Pubnico on the success of their first Pumpkinville. We look forward to next year's creations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**VOLUNS.: CREATION OF BIRDLAND COM. GARDEN - RECOG.**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I rise today to recognize an incredible volunteer who started Birdland Community Garden at the D.J. Butler Park Playground on Flamingo Drive.

Last November, a small group of local residents proposed an idea of a community garden. After approaching the city for guidance, fundraising, and a generous donation by Councillor Kathryn Morse, this vision became a reality. They have purchased wood, soil, and other supplies to build garden beds and are almost done construction on their shed.

I had the opportunity to visit recently, and I'm so impressed by this initiative. Anyone in the neighbourhood is welcome to apply for a garden bed, while preference will be given to residents with limited means of growing food themselves and newcomers to Canada.

I would ask the House to join me in recognizing this group of volunteer residents who are helping make Clayton Park West an inclusive community for everyone.

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

**MUSIC TEACHERS: HARD WORK FOR STUDENTS - RECOG.**

KENDRA COOMBES: In honour of Music Week, I want to recognize all music teachers. Music education is vital to our education system for many reasons. Music is a part of what makes us human.

It is a way to express and communicate our thoughts and feeling. Music lasts a lifetime. Studies have shown that Alzheimer's patients who have diminished speech capabilities are able to sing lyrics of songs from their youth. Working at Maple Hill Manor, I remember residents who sang in Gaelic every day.

Music teaches people valuable life skills. It requires commitment, it teaches co-operation, teamwork, and patience. Music teaches body awareness and eye coordination through clapping, stomping, and playing an instrument. Music, like mathematics, is a universal language. Some people need coaching or coaxing, however, everyone can make music.

I ask the House in joining me in recognizing our hard-working music teachers who encourage every student to make music.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**TRIDER, KRISTA: RECIP. OF 2021 BOWL OF HYGEIA AWD.  
FROM N.S. PHARMACY ASSOC. - CONGRATS.**

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to offer sincere congratulations to Windsor pharmacist Krista Trider for being named the 2021 Bowl of Hygeia Award winner by the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia.

This award recognizes pharmacists who possess outstanding records of civic leadership in their communities. Many pharmacists work long hours and still make time to perform very valuable contributions to our communities.

The Windsor Elms Village describes Krista as demonstrating leadership by working closely with residents, which is evident in the role she believes pharmacy can play in geriatric care.

I would ask that all members congratulate pharmacist Krista Trider on a truly deserving award.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

**CUISINE ROBICHEAU: RECIP. OF TASTE OF N.S. AWARD - RECOG.**

RONNIE LEBLANC: Every year, the Taste of Nova Scotia Awards recognize the people and products at the heart of the Nova Scotia culinary industry. This October, the Award for Service was given to the team from La Cuisine Robicheau.

For those of you who have not had a chance to enjoy a meal at La Cuisine, this is Nadine and Scott's restaurant located in a renovated old house that overlooks St. Mary's Bay in Saulnierville. The team, many there since the restaurant first opened 10 years ago, welcome their guests as friends dropping in for a visit and a meal. Often, they are friends of the restaurant returning to enjoy yet another meal of a local seafood or r p ure.

I want to add my congratulations to the team from La Cuisine Robicheau. Their attention to service adds so much to the dining experience at the restaurant. Merci.

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



**MIRSKY WEXLER, BOAZ & DOV:  
COMBINED BAR MITZVAH CELEBRATION - CONGRATS.**

LISA LACHANCE: A bar mitzvah ceremony celebrates a Jewish boy's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday on the Hebrew calendar and his elevation to adult status in Judaism. It is typically a time of prayer and celebration, and like so many things, Jewish communities around the world found their traditional ceremonies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the Mirsky Wexler family, their two sons are celebrating a combined bar mitzvah this coming weekend for sons Boaz and Dov. Boaz, as the oldest, had to wait so that the worst of COVID-19 was over, and now the boys will share in the reading of the Torah for friends, family, and community.

I ask all members to send their best wishes to the Mirsky Wexler family for their upcoming celebration and to all Nova Scotians catching up on important milestones.

[1:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**STEWART, SHARON & JOHN:  
SALE OF SHARON'S PLACE REST. - CONGRATS.**

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sharon and John Stewart on the recent sale of their business, Sharon's Place Restaurant. The Stewarts have owned and operated this popular Pictou restaurant for 20 years and are looking forward to a well-deserved break and spending more time with family.

The Stewarts are more than just local business owners - they are also good friends. Located across the street from my constituency office, I have frequented Sharon's restaurant many times. It has been a popular place for locals and visitors to dine, especially during our annual lobster carnival. As it states on their Facebook page, it is a place where people enter as strangers and leave as friends.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Sharon and John for their many dedicated years of service and wish them luck with their new adventures. I further wish to congratulate the new owners and hope they have many years of success, as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**GRANT, GEORGE SIDNEY: 90<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY - BEST WISHES**

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate a very important birthday milestone in the community of Point Edward. Mr. George Sidney Grant, affectionately

know as Sidney, turned 90 on Friday, October 29, 2021. A small gathering of friends and family were together to celebrate this great man. Sidney is a retired Deputy Fire Chief of the Westmount Fire Department and spent his entire life in service to his community.

I would ask the members of this Assembly to please join me celebrating and congratulating Sidney on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**ROLLE, MARIO - RECIP. OF 2021 OUTSTANDING HEALTH CARE PROVIDER AWD. FROM MHFNS - CONGRATS.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I have risen before in this House to highlight the outstanding work done by the Nova Scotia Brotherhood Initiative, a program providing culturally-appropriate health care for Black men. Today I want to focus on a key member of that team, Mario Rolle, who was recently awarded the Mental Health Association of Nova Scotia's 2021 Outstanding Healthcare Provider "Let's Keep Talking" Award.

Originally from the Bahamas, Mario moved to Nova Scotia in 2009 and has since volunteered and worked for an impressive list of community groups including the Association of Black Social Workers, Ceasefire, 7th Step Society of Nova Scotia, Health Association of African Canadians, New Start Counselling, and Dartmouth's Public Good Society.

Mario is currently the Health Services Manager for the Brotherhood, where he continues to support and empower Black men. In that role, he also is an important member of a network of organizations that support vulnerable people in Dartmouth North.

I ask that this House join me in expressing gratitude to Mario Rolle for his hard work, dedication, compassion, and advocacy and congratulate him on this exciting award.

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

**DIVERSITY IN HOUSE:  
POSITIVE CHANGES THAT WILL RESULT - RECOG.**

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, we encounter many biases in our day-to-day activities. They surface in many ways and in a variety of circumstances. We encounter racial bias, cultural bias, religious bias, and political bias just to name a few. If not recognized and controlled, we will be the weaker for it.

In this House, we have diversity. We have racial diversity, cultural diversity, religious diversity, political diversity, and diversity of personalities and backgrounds.

When accepted and welcomed, we are the stronger for it. There is great strength in diversity, and I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the diversity that is in this House.

I want to acknowledge the strength that comes from it and look forward to seeing the positive changes that will emerge for our province as a result. I rise today to appreciate it and to celebrate it. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

**FITZGERALD, CATE:  
PARTICIPATING IN NAT'L. JR. CURLING CH'SHIPS - BEST WISHES**

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize an exceptional young curler from my constituency: Cate Fitzgerald who, along with her teammates Taylour Stevens, Lauren Ferguson, and Allison Umlah, will be competing at the National Junior Championships in Saskatoon later this month. If successful at the tournament - which I, of course, hope they will be - hopefully they will be competing at the World Championships in Sweden in February.

Cate has represented Nova Scotia on three previous occasions and she has won two bronze medals. I would ask all members of the House to recognize Cate and her teammates for their dedication, hard work, and wish them good luck.

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

**WHITNEY PIER MUSIC FDN.:  
PROVIDING SERVS. TO STUDS. - RECOG.**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Whitney Pier Music Foundation, a division of Ethiopia Community Club Menelik Association.

The foundation's mission is to provide an opportunity for people of all ages to learn and play music together. It brings together accomplished musicians with music students, creating opportunities for them to practise and perform, building confidence and skills.

Mr. Speaker, the Whitney Pier Music Foundation provides students with the ability to work in small groups with an instructor, partake in jam sessions and dress rehearsals. It also provides students with the ability to have live showcases and specialized workshops on a variety of topics.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in recognizing Whitney Pier Music Foundation on all their accomplishments.

THE SPEAKER: The honorable member for Queens.

**WAMBOLDT, DEBBIE & TEAM:  
FUNDRAISING FOR QUEENS PLAY PARK - CONGRATS.**

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, in 2016 a group of Queens County parents of children with autism and other needs asked their community to address the lack of safe places for their children to play. This led to the innovative idea of the Queens Universally Designed Play Park. Supported by partnership between the region of Queens and Autism Nova Scotia, the fundraising budget was set at \$450,000.

Since that time, committee lead Debbie Wamboldt and her team have worked tirelessly to keep their cause at the forefront. Through a variety of fundraising initiatives by people of all ages and from all walks of life, they have collected donations and contributions.

On October 29<sup>th</sup> of this year it was announced that fundraising had surpassed \$593,000. The ground-breaking ceremony will take place later this Fall and a grand opening of the park is planned in Spring of 2022.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to congratulate Debbie and her team and applaud all who have helped them attain this goal. The people of Queens have shown again the power of community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**NEW ALBANY'S LITTLE FREE LIBRARY: RECIPIENT OF VALLEY'S  
BEST AWARD FOR BEST NON-PROFIT ORG. - CONGRATS.**

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize New Albany's Little Free Library, the Best Non-profit Organization winner at the recent Valley's Best awards.

Valley's Best is an initiative of the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce and the winners are selected by the residents. Recipients can take great pride in knowing that their efforts are appreciated by so many in the community.

New Albany's Little Free Library was created to inspire a love of reading, build community, and spark creativity by fostering book exchange around the world. Over the last three years of operation, they have gifted more than 1,200 books at Christmas, 200 books through the Summer reading program, and 1,500 books, movies and puzzles through their free giveaway.

I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Elizabeth Lewellyn and the New Albany Little Free Library team on receiving this award and in thanking them for their commitment to giving back to the community.

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

**BALAD'ARTS:  
BILINGUAL PUBLIC ART TOURS IN HALIFAX - CONGRATS.**

LISA LACHANCE: M. le président, aujourd'hui je voudrais reconnaître Balad'arts, un effort collaboratif entre l'Alliance française d'Halifax, la galerie de l'art de l'université Mount Saint Vincent et Canadian Parents for French. Au cours de l'été et l'automne, ils ont offert des tours d'art public à Halifax, y compris aux Jardins publiques dans ma circonscription. C'est une façon de rendre l'art qu'on se trouve à Halifax plus accessible à des gens francophones.

M. le président, j'invite les autres membres à me joindre en félicitant ces organisations pour leurs tours bilingues qui promeuvent l'art local et les deux langues officielles canadiennes.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Balad'arts. It's a collaboration between Alliance Française of Halifax, the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, and Canadian Parents for French. This Summer and Fall, they offered public art tours across Halifax, including in the Public Gardens in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I invite other members to join me in congratulating these organizations for their bilingual tours that promote local art and both official languages of Canada.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

**RAMSEY, DUNCAN:  
SELECTED BY SIOUX CITY MUSKETEERS HOCKEY TEAM - RECOG.**

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, it's a dream of many youths to reach their highest level in their sport. For another youth from East Hants, he is achieving his dream one goal at a time.

Duncan Ramsey recently heard his name being called out at the U.S. Hockey League Phase II Draft, getting selected by the Sioux City Musketeers. His work ethic is visible in practice and games and his hard work continues to pay off. Duncan plays defence and is a force on the blue line, with his 6' 2" stature being an intimidating presence on the ice.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of watching Duncan Ramsey help East Hants Penguins bring home the Peewee AAA provincial banner several years ago and now wish him all the best with his new team, the Sioux City Musketeers.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**MURPHY, KEVIN: WORK DONE IN HOUSE - RECOG.**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to recognize a former member of this House as many of us do from time to time. I want to recognize Kevin Murphy.

Kevin Murphy was the Speaker of this House from 2013 to 2021. He was a leader, not only, here in Nova Scotia for advocating for more accessibility in our communities, but also, he was also a leader in the international community on the committee on accessibility trying to make Legislatures more accessible across the Commonwealth.

He is the champion of the legislation that we passed as a province to make Nova Scotia accessible to all by 2030. I rise in my place to recognize him for the work that he has done, for his time as Speaker of the House, as a gentleman, as a family man, and as my friend. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

**MACRAE, DONNIE:  
DELIVERED 10,000<sup>th</sup> MEAL WITH MEALS ON WHEELS - RECOG.**

HON. BRIAN COMER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Donnie MacRae of Howie Centre, who recently delivered his 10,000<sup>th</sup> meal with Meals on Wheels.

This 75-year-old Cape Bretoner has been delivering meals for almost 20 years, despite a recent cancer diagnosis. A couple of times a week Donnie arrives at the headquarters for Meals on Wheels where he has said it feels like working with a team. He also notes the reward is the people you deal with and knowing they are getting a nice meal.

I would like to stand here today Mr. Speaker to congratulate Donnie MacRae for such valuable community work and thank him for all of his efforts.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**DRISKILL, RON: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ron Driskill. Ron is a talented citizen who built the Masthead News, a community newspaper and business, from scratch. The publication, founded in 1991, has survived the past 32 years and remains today an independent monthly free newspaper that continually shares the community stories from Timberlea to Lunenburg.

Ron has always been an avid reader, writer, an advocate of hard learning, and learned journalism skills that would later become his career while covering stories for the U.S. Armed Forces. Masthead News has always incorporated much community flavour, events, people, photos, milestones, and celebrations as possible and focussed on local people and their successes.

In later years, Ron became an active supporter of several underprivileged children in Third World countries. His daughters recall the refrigerator and walls of his home covered with smiling foster kid photos.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Ron for his entrepreneurial spirit that drove his business, supported his family, and served many in other communities. His many friends, neighbours, readers, and supporters join the family in wishing Ron a happy and restful retirement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Shelburne.

**NICKERSON, WALTER:  
INTERNATIONAL DORY ROWING CHAMPION - RECOG.**

NOLAN YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Walter Nickerson, a lifelong resident of Lockeport.

Walter, who turned 75 this year, is an International Dory Rowing champion, winning 17 international titles in his 50 years of competing. Walter started rowing in the 1960s at age 24 and he's been rowing and competing for the last 50 years. Walter and his first partner won five championships until, to quote Walter, "I lost him to a girlfriend."

Mr. Speaker, Walter now rows with Willie Wells from Lunenburg, who is 10 years his junior. They have won three of the four championships in the past five years. During the Winter months, Walter bicycles eight kilometres to watch and help with high school basketball - his Winter sport - rarely missing a game.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask all members to join me in recognizing Walter Nickerson, who is an inspiration to many of us.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**VOLUNS. AT CENTENNIAL LEGION BR. 160:  
POPPY SALES - RECOG.**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to acknowledge the amazing volunteers who contribute to the Poppy Campaign at the Centennial Legion

Branch 160 which I am proud to say is in my constituency. They utilize over 700 volunteers.

The Legion relies on several community groups that have shown up every year to cover 13,000 volunteer hours in 13 days. Some of these groups are the 117 Preston/Westphal Royal Canadian Army Cadets, the Girl Guides 2<sup>nd</sup> Brookhouse who also help decorate over 12,000 veterans' graves at Memorial Gardens, and the Better Together group who spend hundreds and hundreds of hours helping with the poppies.

I'm very honoured to say that this Friday I'll be helping out this organization at the Sobeys on Panavista Drive. I'm very honoured to contribute in some small way to remembering the veterans.

I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking all the volunteers who recognize the importance of Remembrance Day and keep contributing year after year. Lest we forget.

[1:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**ANTIG. CoC: RECIPS. OF SMALL BUS. AWDS. - CONGRATS.**

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, recently the Antigonish Chamber of Commerce celebrated local small businesses. Small businesses have had to adapt and change how they do business in order to survive in these uncertain times.

I rise today to recognize those who were recently presented with Small Business Awards by the Antigonish Chamber of Commerce as they celebrated Small Business Week.

Heather Scott, owner of Happenstance, was presented with the East Coast Credit Union- sponsored Outstanding Customer Service Award; the Emerging Business Award, sponsored by RBC, was presented to Tareq Hadhad of Peace by Chocolate; Jacqueline Throop-Robinson of Spark Engagement was presented with the Export Achievement Award sponsored by RBC; and the Ian Spencer Excellence in Business Award, sponsored by CBDC and NOBL, was presented to Matthew MacDonald on behalf of the Antigonish Farm and Garden Co-op.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating these award winners and wish them continued success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.



**NORTH BREWING COMPANY:  
NEW TAPROOM IN TIMBERLEA - CONGRATS.**

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge North Brewing Company.

North Brewing opened in 2013 in the north end of Halifax, founded by Peter Burbridge, Rozina Darvesh, and Josh Herbin. They opened a small brewery and retail shop, selling cans and growlers to go. They couldn't keep their beer in stock.

Since then, the team has constantly worked hard to provide great beer to their huge fan base in Halifax and Dartmouth, all the while opening a second shop in the basement of Battery Park, but eventually moving locations to Cole Harbour in January 2019. Cole Harbour, they say, has been so gracious to them and kind to them, especially through the pandemic.

Their kitchen, named Side Hustle, participated in Burger Week, showcasing three burgers. However, the Smash Burger which they have, which is a must try, Mr. Speaker. On their behalf, I'd like to announce a wish that they have all the success in the opening of their new taproom in Timberlea.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**BLAIR, DAVID: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Mr. David Blair of Wallace Bridge. David recently retired as a senior engineer from Nova Scotia Parks this past July, after working for the province since 1996 when he worked as an engineer for the Department of Environment.

David has a passion for the parks and ensuring that they were accessible, maintained, and enjoyed. David put his passion into the parks so that others could enjoy the many amazing parks such as the Amherst Shore Park here in Cumberland North. Now that Dave is retired, he will be focusing on his own business, Blair's Sales & Services.

Please join me today in thanking David Blair for his years of service to the Department of Environment and Nova Scotia Parks, and we wish him well as he enjoys his retirement.

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

**GLOADE, GERALD: ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.**

DAVE RITCEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible works of a Mi'kmaw artist, Gerald Gloade.

Mr. Gloade, of Millbrook First Nation, has created a series of historical pieces for Parks Canada and the federal government which were used for signage and interpretive panels to foster the knowledge of Indigenous histories, cultures, and traditions.

Mr. Gloade's work is also being celebrated with his second coin in the Creatures of the North series by the Canadian Mint. Most recently, Mr. Gloade has displayed an impressive 30-piece show in the Colchester-East Hants Public Library.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the members of the House to join me in congratulating the efforts of such a talented artist.

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

**WALKER, RUSSELL: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a celebrated member of the Fairview-Clayton Park community, Mr. Russell Walker.

Russell has been involved in our community for decades. He began his career as an industrial arts teacher at Clayton Park Junior. High where he also coached the hockey team. He then moved into public office, serving as local HRM councillor for 27 years. He was a tireless champion for our community and was a trusted voice on council for thousands of HRM residents.

After retiring, Russell was diagnosed with cancer, but I'm happy to say that he has finished chemotherapy and is enjoying a well-deserved retirement, as well as enjoying his beautiful new grandson, Emerson.

Russell still volunteers in the community and was recently recognized by the Canada Games Centre who renamed their community room after him. He started as my teacher, he then became my friend Laurel's dad, and when I entered public office, he ended up being a mentor and really like a dad figure to me. Although I give this title freely in the Chamber, he really is my favourite Tory.

I'll ask all members of the House to join me in thanking Russell Walker for his tireless service to the residents of Fairview-Clayton Park. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**AQUAKULTRE: NOM. WITH UNCLE FESTER FOR N.S. MUSIC AWARD  
FOR BLEEDING GUMS MURPHY ALBUM - CONGRATS.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, we have been speaking a lot about aquaculture this session in the House, but today I want to talk about a way cooler Aquakultre - that is the hip-hop, R&B solo artist-turned-band who teamed up with DJ Uncle Fester to create the album *Bleeding Gums Murphy* which is nominated for a Music Nova Scotia Award for R&B/Soul Recording of the Year.

*Bleeding Gums Murphy*, which takes its name from the Simpsons character of the same name, is an album of rich and powerful lyrics laid on top of Uncle Fester's innovative music and beats, resulting in a truly beautiful and catchy album. It's a follow-up album to Aquakultre's *Legacy*, which was long-listed for the prestigious Polaris Prize in 2020, and many of the tracks feature guest artists including GhettoSocks, Ambition, Nilla, Tachichi, Corey Writez, and Andre Fenton.

Commissioned by the Mayworks Kjiipuktuk Halifax Festival, Aquakultre and Uncle Fester, who makes his home in Dartmouth North, created a live performance of the album which featured a huge onstage band and many of the guests from the album, with musical direction by the great Erin Costello.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Aquakultre and DJ Uncle Fester on the exceptional musical accomplishment of *Bleeding Gums Murphy* and for its Music Nova Scotia nomination.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**HUNTLEY, CHARITY: ORGANIZ. OF EVENTS PROMOTING DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSIVENESS - THANKS**

CHRIS PALMER: I rise today to acknowledge the time and commitment made by Ms. Charity Huntley to make our community a safe and welcome place for everyone.

Charity has been a strong voice in our community, promoting diversity and inclusiveness. She has been instrumental in organizing several events supporting and educating about the Black Lives Matter movement and is a strong ally to the BIPOC community.

Some of the events she organized include a Black Lives Matter Peaceful Protest March, and a Solidarity for Black Lives Matter concert with my good friends the amazing band Shoulder to Shoulder. She's also organized a town hall panel discussion focused on racism in our communities and how we can stand together in unity, which myself and more than 75 other people attended.

Charity is also looking to help others find their voice in our community and has been instrumental in the Town of Berwick for creating change. Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Charity Huntley for educating our community and advocating for diversity and inclusivity.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**MEMBER FOR ANNAPOLIS: WORK AS CONSTITUENCY ASSISTANT  
AND ELECTION TO HOUSE - CONGRATS.**

HON. KEITH IRVING: Our journey through politics connects us with many hard-working, selfless individuals who aim solely to serve the people of our province. I had the sincere pleasure of working with one of these individuals, the honourable member for Annapolis, who served as my constituency assistant in Kings South for nearly three years - until he decided to put his name forward to be the next MLA Liberal candidate in Annapolis.

The member charted through some of the most challenging days as a constituency assistant when the pandemic emerged, answering hundreds of phone calls, showing dedication to the people of our community, the desire to fact-find, information-share, and help our constituents in every way possible. I'm honoured now to serve with him in the House, and I'm grateful to have this opportunity to thank him for the years that he worked in my constituency office.

I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the member on becoming the elected MLA for Annapolis, and I wish him all the best in his political endeavour.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**PETIT-DE-GRAT RED CAPS : WINNING RICH. AMAT. BASEBALL  
ASSOC. TITLE - CONGRATS.**

TREVOR BOUDREAU: The Richmond Amateur Baseball Association was able to have a baseball season this summer, albeit a shortened one. The RABA, as it is known in the Strait Area, held their league championship tournament on the September 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> weekend at the Petit-de-Grat Ballfield.

There was no league play in 2020 due to COVID restrictions, so it was especially nice to have some great baseball being played this year.

Congratulations to the Petit-de-Grat Red Caps for winning their second consecutive RABA title by defeating the Isle Madame Mariners in the finals. Bringing a sense of

normalcy to the area during a challenging time was welcomed by fans and players alike. We all look forward to a full season of RABA baseball in 2022.

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

**FLEWELLING, ALYSON - WORK ON ELECTION CAMPAIGN -  
THANKS**

LORELEI NICOLL: Today I rise to thank an incredible student volunteer who worked tirelessly this Summer on my campaign.

Alyson Flewelling, an NSCC student, bravely agreed to accept the role as chair of the Get Out the Vote campaign. Alyson worked tirelessly every day for one month, knocking on doors, collecting and recording voter data, making phone calls, and arranging election day transportation to the polling stations.

Every year HRM holds an awards ceremony during National Volunteer Week, and in 2018 I was honoured to present Alyson with the Halifax Regional Municipality Youth Volunteer Award for District 4. Youth volunteers bring to our communities energetic perspectives and new ideas, and for this I ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking Alyson Flewelling.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

**SACK. BUS. ASSOC. - HOSTING FREE CONCERTS AT ACADIA PARK  
IN SUMMER - THANKS**

HON. STEVE CRAIG: I rise today to thank the team at the Sackville Business Association in Lower Sackville.

This past Summer, on Sunday evenings, the Sackville Business Association, in conjunction with local musicians and sponsors, hosted free concerts at Acadia Park. Featured musicians from various genres entertained the community by sharing their musical talents. Since the pandemic shut down so many events, these concerts were very well-received. It was refreshing to see so many people tapping their toes or clapping along to the beat of the music.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking the Sackville Business Association and our local musicians and sponsors for bringing the community together again after a very long time.

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

**MADELINE SYMONDS MID. SCHOOL BOYS & GIRLS CROSS-COUNTRY  
TEAMS: MAKING PROVINCIALS - CONGRATS.**

HON. BEN JESSOME: Thanks, everyone. I am so glad to receive that enthusiasm, because I am equally as enthusiastic about my member's statement. We're all very enthusiastic to see sports and activities come back online since the pandemic.

I want to recognize both the boys and the girls cross-country teams at Madeline Symonds Middle School. They were successful in making provincials, which were hosted in Bridgewater on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Our girls placed thirteenth and our boys made it to the top of the podium, bringing home the title and the provincial banner for one of the first times, if not the first time, in the school's history. The coaches, Ashley Feaver, Lisa Richardson, and Lindsey MacDonald, all encouraged their students to do their best, as I know volunteers and teachers do all the time.

I'll ask the team here at the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the boys and girls at Madeline Symonds.

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

**SUBURBAN FC U17 AAA GIRLS SOCCER TEAM: PROV. CH'SHIP WIN -  
CONGRATS.**

HON. BRIAN WONG: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to congratulate the Suburban FC U17 AAA girls' soccer team on their provincial championship win. Four of the team's players - Mya Archibald, Emma Crowe, Isabel Gonsalves, and goalie Ellie Lancaster - are residents of the Fall River area. This Suburban FC U17 AAA team had an unbeaten league record of 13 wins and 0 losses while scoring 95 goals and surrendering 0 for their 2021 Summer season.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating this remarkable team on their record season and their championship win.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**BLUENOSE FUNDRAISING: WORK WITH COM. GRPS. - RECOG., ALI  
DUALE**

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this time to celebrate the work of Bluenose Fundraising in Halifax. Bluenose Fundraising is a family organization in the business of helping people host and supply fundraising. From helping set up the fundraising campaign to advice on how to run it, Bluenose helps people achieve their fundraising goals. When working with Bluenose, you can expect to be treated like a family. For over seven

years, this company has been working with community groups, schools, and individuals to organize the process and supply the baked goods or any other needs.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to celebrate a family-owned Nova Scotia business that works behind the scenes in fundraising across HRM.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS N.S.: 10<sup>TH</sup> ANN. TRUCK CONVOY FUNDRAISER - THANKS**

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Truck Convoy for Special Olympics. Saturday, September 18, 2021, marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the convoy. The community's very own Leo J. Beazley was able to participate, and I thank the whole community for coming out and supporting this wonderful event.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Members' Statements has expired.

[2:00 p.m.]

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

THE SPEAKER: The time is now two o'clock. We'll finish at 2:50 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**PREM.: UNIV. SEATS FOR NURSING - INCREASE**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I've been asking throughout the session and trying to cajole the government to start to increase seats for nursing students at our universities. This has worked in the past and will continue to work, like making the 70 seats for RNs permanent at Cape Breton University and Yarmouth. When I asked on October 21<sup>st</sup>, will the Premier commit to more seats for nurses, CCAs, LPNs, and other health professionals, he said yes, he will.

Given that we still have students - and I'll table that - just learning that we have lots of students who actually want to enter this field, some of them with averages over 90 per cent but not being able to get in, I'd like to ask the Premier: When and what universities will have seats for nursing?

THE PREMIER: I thank the member for this important question. I read the media report today as well. We have lots of young, smart, ambitious Nova Scotians who want to enter the health care system. We want them there, too.

Our minister and I had a call last week with a couple of hundred nursing students. They expressed some concerns about getting their clinicals and getting through the program. We have lots of factors to work out, but certainly we want more seats. We want more people being educated in this province to enter our health care profession, but we've got to do it in the right way.

IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. We want the government to be successful in their goal to get to that 2,000 new nurses in our system. We have other provinces investing heavily in their post-secondary and we have that opportunity to do that here. We have staff shortages at long-term care facilities as well - 16 long-term care centres have staff shortages that need to find new nurses, so we need these seats.

We proposed 270 new LPNs. That's what the evidence showed when we asked. So the work is there and all they need to do is approve the funding at some of these sites. If we want to have LPNs in our system, we need the seats in today. These are two- and four-year programs for nursing.

Will the Premier commit to putting the 270 seats, increasing those seats, in the Nova Scotia Community College?

THE PREMIER: There's no question that we need to educate more people for health care in this province. That's part of the solution, and so is recruitment, but above all else we need to retain the people we have working in the health care system and support them.

This week the Opposition would have seen some moves by the minister to get the recruiting wheels rolling. We have a lot of work to do, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot to catch up on. There has been a lot of neglect in the health care system for a number of years. We're doing our very best to reverse that trend, and we'll keep on.

IAIN RANKIN: One of the things that changed when we came into government is the relationship with our post-secondary institutions and the value that we put in them. The previous government, the NDP, cut funding to universities. We increased it every single year. This does go beyond health care and it really speaks to how the government sees the opportunities of our post-secondary, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask the Premier if he is committed. People want to see investments now, not just \$1.7 million to recruit people we don't have, Mr. Speaker. We need seats in these schools. I'd like to ask the Premier how he sees the relationships with universities and if he is prepared to make the significant investment in the post-secondary that we need now.



THE PREMIER: Of course, we in this province are very proud of our post-secondary institutions. They are critical to a number of communities across this province. There's no question about that. Just go to Antigonish, go to Wolfville, you'll see the impact of our post-secondary institutions on this province and on the economy of our province. We, as a province, as taxpayers, have been investing in these institutions for a long time. That will certainly continue.

The answer to the question of how we see them is we see them as partners.

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

**PREM.: MINIMUM WAGE - NEED FOR INCREASE**

GARY BURRILL: Yesterday, in an exchange about the minimum wage, the Premier said that he thinks that working people have the right to be able to make enough to be able to afford housing and pay for their groceries. Now, this key word here, "enough" - there are important economic numbers that have been published today to define that. In the *Living Wages in Nova Scotia 2021* report of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the answer is, in Halifax, \$22.05 an hour, and in Cape Breton, \$18.45 an hour.

Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier think we're going to get to a living wage in Nova Scotia if the government won't establish a minimum wage that will put us anywhere within striking distance of the goal?

THE PREMIER: I'm not sure if the member is advocating now for a \$22 minimum wage or an \$18 minimum wage, or yesterday it was \$15. I think, irrespective of that, the reality is that we do believe that this should be a province where everyone can achieve their opportunities, seize their opportunities, and thrive.

We do know as well that we have multiple shortages in our workplaces. I talk to employers every single day that are offering \$20 an hour or \$25 an hour and just can't find the workforce. There are opportunities in this province. Do we need to do more to create more opportunities? Of course we do, and that's exactly where we'll continue to focus.

GARY BURRILL: The living wage report published today that I'm speaking of draws heavily on the work of economist David Macdonald on this very question, labour shortages in a low-wage sector. The thing that Dr. Macdonald indicates is that it's not so much a matter of simply a shortage of workers. It's a shortage of workers who are interested in working for the wages that are on offer. He explains and points out that a higher minimum wage will draw more people into the service sector and thereby prevent a lot of businesses having to close.

Mr. Speaker, how does the Premier think businesses are going to get the employees that they need when he's telling everyone that a minimum wage that's practically \$10 below a living wage is acceptable somehow in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: The fact of the matter is, I would never tell an employer what to pay somebody. Employers decide what to pay people. The minimum they can pay is a certain amount. They can pay whatever they want. This is not a question of the government telling anybody a maximum of what to pay. The market will supply itself, will balance itself when it finds the labour is there and the wages are there properly. There are issues in the marketplace right now, no question. I think that most of the issues are on a shortage of labour side, as opposed to an abundance of it.

GARY BURRILL: Nobody, Mr. Speaker, but the government establishes the minimum wage.

Yesterday when I questioned the Premier about Ontario's introduction of a \$15 minimum wage, he indicated that he didn't think Ontario's and Nova Scotia's situations were comparable. In some sense, that's true. Statistics Canada has said recently this Fall that the inflation rate in Halifax is actually a full point worse than it is in Toronto.

Will the Premier explain why he thinks that a person who's working for, say, Walmart in Amherst or in Antigonish doesn't deserve the same wage as a person who's working for Walmart in Sudbury or Sarnia?

THE PREMIER: Because of the cost of living - the living situations are different. That's just pure market economics. Maybe the members don't think it is.

I would actually return the question with a question. Why does the member think that the most an employer can pay is the minimum wage? It's actually not. It's actually the minimum they can pay. If the market wants to pay more, they can pay more. That's the simple mathematics of it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **PREM. - MIDWIFERY: EXPAND - COMMIT**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Today, on the due date of my first child, I would like to ask a question about midwives. (Applause)

My question is for the Premier. As a regulated health profession, midwives practising in Nova Scotia have graduated from rigorous university programs and are integrated into the provincial health system, working collaboratively with physicians, nurses, and other professionals. There are currently 17 registered midwives who work within the health system in Antigonish, South Shore, and around the Halifax area, but you

cannot access a midwife if you live in other parts of the province, whether it's Cape Breton, Annapolis Valley, or other regions.

Will the Premier commit today to expanding coverage across the province?

THE PREMIER: Well, I have to say, I'm super happy for you. You're going to be an awesome father, so congratulations. (Applause) I would also like to offer the member, if he wants to leave now and be with his wife, he can. (Laughter) Call me later and ask any questions you want.

Listen, this is an important issue. I know the member put forth some policy during the election campaign on midwives, and we're happy to work with him on that to make sure that that's balanced across the province.

IAIN RANKIN: I won't take that offer just yet. There's still a lot of work to do in this session.

Midwifery locum data highlights the excellent clinical care provided by midwives. Midwifery care has also improved health outcomes for parents and newborns at significant cost savings. Midwives in Nova Scotia prioritize priority populations for midwifery care including Indigenous and African Nova Scotians, however there are currently wait-lists for those wanting to access midwifery care in Nova Scotia.

Will the government invest in midwifery by increasing the number of midwifery positions in the province?

THE PREMIER: I agree with the member opposite. We need to increase access and we need more of them. I absolutely agree with the member on that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

### **RASE: NEW BUS. - START-UP FEES**

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier as Minister of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness.

Lowering costs for businesses that are starting out is a key to their future success. As a recommendation from the Economic Growth Council, we had committed to eliminating government start-up fees and regulatory fees for new businesses.

Is the Premier willing to commit to helping Nova Scotia businesses by not increasing or creating new fees in the next budget?

THE PREMIER: I like your style, but the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said, don't commit to anything before we actually have budget consultations. (Laughter)

FRED TILLEY: I'll thank the Premier for that non-answer.

Businesses should not be burdened by unnecessary or outdated government regulations. Since 2017, the previous government had reduced up to \$50 million in red tape in the province. We were committed to even more in the years ahead. This is also something that was recommended by the Economic Growth Council.

Since the Premier kept this office, what measures will the Premier take to reduce future red tape, and what will the new target be for this office?

THE PREMIER: He just whispered something else in my ear, but I'm not going to say that one.

Reduction of red tape is incredibly important, and I do tip my hat to the former government. They did a lot of good work on red tape reduction. I have much respect for that.

What I would say is, also, I know we've had some talk in this Chamber about the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee, but I urge the members opposite to not discount how important that can be to help businesses pay more money to their workers, put more money in their hands, which will lead to greater success for our business community and for our economy, but for the workers of Nova Scotia. Don't discount it. It's important.

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

### **FTB - DEED TRANSFER TAX: INCREASE - EXPLAIN**

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, in the Deputy Premier's mandate letter it states the minister will implement an additional provincial Deed Transfer Tax on any Nova Scotia property purchased by individuals who do not pay taxes in Nova Scotia and impose a levy on every non-Nova Scotian taxpayer property in Nova Scotia. I'll table that.

The PC government has a goal to double Nova Scotia's population by 2060 and I'll table that. We're already seeing out-of-province homeowners disapprove of these additional taxes.

I ask the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board: What is the purpose of these additional Deed Transfer Taxes and how does the government plan to attract people to this province with this added tax?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: The simple answer is for people who are moving here, it's not an issue because they will live here.

It is something that we are looking at. It was a campaign commitment, a platform commitment. It exists in other provinces. It's found in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick and British Columbia. We've seen a lot of interest in property here by people who live outside of the province, so it's something we're looking at and reviewing. In good time, I'm sure we'll come forward with something.

LORELEI NICOLL: In Pictou County, Deed Transfer Tax for the last fiscal year brought in \$1,793,492. This Deed Transfer Tax was first put into place in Pictou County to generate income to pay the capital costs associated with building the Pictou County Wellness Centre. I'll table that.

What is the minister's plan to utilize this additional Deed Transfer Tax in a way that directly benefits respective municipalities in Nova Scotia, who actually provide municipal services to these properties?

[2:22 p.m.]

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I think it is safe to say we hear ideas on how to spend money every day from the Opposition and there are lots of good things where we could spend money. We are about to go through a budgeting process where we'll have to look at everything and how we are spending money as a government; how can we help people because the reality is that we don't have a limitless pot of money to work with either.

This is a possible revenue generation idea for the province. We are trying to solve issues around housing. We are trying to solve a lot of issues that municipalities aren't responsible for, but we are responsible for and we have to keep that in mind.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

#### **DHW - COMM. HEALTH CTRS.: INCREASE - ACTION**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Community health centres are an important collaborative model of health care delivery that is community-run, -oriented, and -directed. They are an important solution to our primary care conundrum. We can see an example of the incredible work the community health centres do in the North End Community Health Centre in Halifax. Community members and health care providers in Dartmouth North have been working to establish a community health centre for quite some time.

Mr. Speaker, acknowledging that collaborative community health centres are vital parts of primary care and upstream health care, I would like to ask the minister: What action will the minister take to support the establishment of more community health centres across the province?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the question. I actually had a meeting with the group this week and have site visits planned once we get out of the House to go over and visit and understand how best to look at the services they provide, where we can possibly improve those, and where we can roll them out across the province. So there is certainly more to learn.

We have a similar health centre in my community and it does an incredible amount of work. Those discussions are early, but we are very interested in understanding how they play a role in offering primary health care in our province.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, the community health centre model is unique because it's community-governed and focused on the upstream conditions for health such as food security, housing, and social inclusion, but the centres are chronically underfunded and not able to reach the full potential of care they could provide. This is why the Nova Scotia Association of Community Health Centres has a long-standing ask for a one-time stabilization fund of \$4 million so that they can address key operational gaps and participate fully in the collaborative care conversation in Nova Scotia.

I would like to ask the minister: Will the minister commit funds to stabilize and support community health centres so that they can be full participants in solving the health care crisis in Nova Scotia?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I would say is that in this role we continue to look at how we best - in different communities how we provide primary care and primary access. I would say that we are looking at all different types of models across the province. We want to be person-centred, we want to understand what communities need, and we will continue to look at that model across the province going forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

### **NRR - WILLIAMS LAKE: DAM - UPDATE**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. Halifax Atlantic has many residents, including myself, who are still very concerned about Williams Lake. The lake is quite simply disappearing. The dam, as I have said before, needs to be reconstructed now. I would like to ask the minister: What is the update on the dam for Williams Lake?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member - I know it is very important to his constituents. He has brought this before the House earlier this session and I know that he has communicated to myself and my colleague at the Department of Public Works.

The quick response is that we are looking at it. I know that it was an all-party commitment during the election. The two departments are working together. They are going to different levels of government and I hope soon to have a response back for that member.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: During the election, I will remind the minister that all three parties promised on video to address this issue right away. I would like to ask the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables again: Will you keep us updated on a time frame and, as soon as you hear, will the residents of Halifax Atlantic hear?

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I am going to ask the member not to say "you." Refer to "the minister." Thank you.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

TORY RUSHTON: Maybe you could table that video. I was just joking. In all seriousness, the member opposite has brought this to us. We have had quite a few conversations about this. The simple answer to the member opposite is we are certainly going to work with you on this. It was an all-party commitment during the election and I'm very pleased - I did say "you," I apologize. I am very pleased to let the member know that he'll be one of the first ones to know so he can share the information with his constituency.

THE SPEAKER: Just to lighten that up a bit, he did say "you", but he was saying the member and the community.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

#### **DHW: PUBLIC SERVICE VACCINE MANDATE - UPDATE**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We are seeing a problematic trend across the country when it comes to impacts to our labour numbers with mandated vaccines in our health care system. The minister has recently said that they're expanding the deadline for public service workers in Nova Scotia who have received their first dose. Is this because we are experiencing a labour crunch here as a result of this policy?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I thank the member opposite for the question. It is in fact related to the NACI statement. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the NACI statement changed, so the interval between immunizations was different. As a result of that we have moved it forward to give people some time.

Additionally, we saw once the proof of vaccination as well as the mandate was announced there was an uptick in vaccinations. As I said in the media today, we certainly don't want to penalize anyone if they are moving towards vaccination - we want to work with them. It's a bit of both - we want to keep people in the workforce, but we're also following the recommendations of NACI.

**ZACH CHURCHILL:** We are experiencing a labour shortage in the health care system here. We are going to be very focused on ensuring that service delivery is not impacted by any government policies. This is why the reporting on the vacancies is so critical.

I know the minister has said that she will report on these vacancies. She said to the media that that could happen as early as this Friday. In order to ensure that Nova Scotians are informed enough to know what services may be impacted, whether it's surgeries, emergency departments, long-term care, will the minister commit to reporting on the specific job descriptions that might be impacted by a labour shortage related to this issue?

**MICHELLE THOMPSON:** We will. We'll be working with the employers specifically. That information needs to go to Public Health by the end of this week so we have a better understanding of where services will be impacted.

I think what we'll have to do is look at which parts of the sector are impacted, which areas. I don't think it will be just across the board. I think there will be small places where we'll need to lean in and support, and certainly we'll work with employers and communities to ensure that happens.

**THE SPEAKER:** The honourable member for Yarmouth, on a new question.

### **DPW: YARMOUTH FERRY COMMITMENT - CONFIRM**

**HON. ZACH CHURCHILL:** The people of Yarmouth have been overjoyed to see the CAT ferry return to our harbour. It's been three long years without the ferry service running. This is a critical piece of infrastructure not just for the accommodations sector in Yarmouth and the Tri-Counties but also, indeed, across the province.

There is some legitimate concern for the people of Yarmouth around this government's commitment to that ferry service because of the rhetoric that was used, because that party did take Bay Ferries to court. My question to the Minister of Public Works: Can the minister please tell the people of this province if this government is committed to this international ferry link or not?

**HON. KIM MASLAND:** The honourable member would be well aware that we as a province are in a contract until 2026. We would expect that both parties that are part of



this contract would meet up to the standards of the contract. I wish the operator a successful season.

ZACH CHURCHILL: For sure there are people, particularly in the tourism sector, who are taking a sigh of relief from the minister's answer. It is really important. I will be frank - the rhetoric used by the members opposite while in opposition have turned a lot of Nova Scotians against the service. It has affected public perception of it.

This is a service that does bring in tourists who spend twice as much what other tourists spend. It's our link to one of the largest tourism markets in the world. It is a vital piece of infrastructure not just for western Nova Scotia but, indeed, this entire province.

Can the minister please tell us: Will she provide her full-throated support of this service, so long as it's producing the numbers that we need it to?

KIM MASLAND: I'm glad I wore a turtleneck today. (Laughter)

As I said previously, we are in a contract until 2026, and we expect both parties that are in that contract to meet the conditions of that contract.

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

### **LSI - ISLAND EMPLOYMENT: OMBUDS. REPORT - COMMENT**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration. The Office of the Ombudsman conducted an investigation of Island Employment based on complaints made by workers. The resulting report made a number of recommendations for the minister's department. These recommendations included revising policies, developing new accountability framework, and implementing a process to respond to the complaints about Nova Scotia Works agencies. I'll table that.

The Office of the Ombudsman did not recommend the closure of Island Employment. However, on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 30 program employees received notice that they would be permanently laid off.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: Why did the minister choose to close Island Employment instead of working with the organizations to implement the recommendations?

HON. JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for this important question. One thing that's really important is the decision to close the organization wasn't a government decision. Our contract was with the funds and that is one thing that we made a decision around, to close the contract early, based on the results from the Ombudsman report.

One thing that I really want to be able to say to the employees is that we're listening, and we really do care about the work they were delivering. We are working very hard to make sure that there is a new provider in place. That is one of our commitments and we are moving very fast to make that happen.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Ombudsman investigated the allegations under the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act, Nova Scotia's whistleblower legislation. This Act is designed to encourage public servants and others to expose perceived wrongdoing and to protect whistleblowers against reprisals. Workers at Island Employment had been asking the province to look into financial mismanagement for years. Now Island Work staff, who are not responsible for the fiscal management, have been laid off.

My question to the minister is: Will the minister admit that her department's decision violates the protections provided by our province's whistleblowers Act?

JILL BALSER: Again, thank you to the member opposite for the important question. We're working again very hard to make sure that there is a new provider in place so that the employees know there will be positions for them under that new service provider. We're working very hard and moving as fast as possible.

Again, we want to let the employees know that we realize that this was a hard decision and an important one to make. The results from the Ombudsman were significant and substantial and that was the reason that the department made the decision that we did.

Again, to the employees, we see them, and we hear them, and we know that it is important for them to know the good work they were doing, and they can continue to do that under the new service provider.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

#### **AGRIC. - WINE INDUSTRY: COVID-19 DISRUPTIONS - ASSIST**

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. (Applause) He's stepping into the ring; he's got his fans behind him.

In recent years the wine industry in Nova Scotia has emerged as a significant economic sector in the Annapolis Valley. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has caused significant labour disruptions in the vineyards, the tasting bars and the restaurants despite increased wages and bonuses.

My question to the minister is: Has the minister met with representatives of the wine industry? Are there plans in development to assist the wine growers and wineries with the labour shortages experienced by this important agricultural sector?

HON. GREG MORROW: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the member opposite for the question. Yes, we have had meetings with some members of the industry and, as different members of this government have said, nothing is off the table and we're willing to listen.

KEITH IRVING: I guess the food is on the dinner table, nothing is off the table.

Mr. Speaker, the wine industry has faced an unusual problem this year, an extraordinary grape growing year resulting in banner production. While we have extraordinary, award-winning wines, there is now a growing challenge in marketing our wines to the world.

My question to the minister is: What plans does the minister have in taking the marketing and promotion of our wines to the next level?

GREG MORROW: Again, these are conversations that we are having as a department. I'll defer to the Minister of Health and Wellness on what day it is in the new government, but these are early days and there are lots of plans in the works. Thank you.

[2:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

### **DOJ: CENTRAL N.S. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY ISSUES - ADDRESS**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Premier kindly, and he kindly answered, regarding the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility. I thank him for that, but I would like to ask the Minister of Justice: Under the previous government, there was a commitment to transition the east unit at this facility into a separate facility to specifically address the needs of women in custody.

Is this government committed to creating a separate facility, and what updates can the minister provide this House on its status?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. We are aware of that. The commitment is still there and there are a number of opportunities that the department's looking at. We don't really have anything concrete yet that we want to bring back, but we are looking at that and recognize that that was a commitment.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: I want to thank the minister. I look forward to the updates on that.

Also, Mr. Speaker, earlier this year there was a disturbing video of an inmate located in the east unit of the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility that was released on social media. The video is of a female inmate placed in health segregation in a cell

needing medical assistance as she was suffering from a diabetic low. DOJ said that they would be investigating this matter from a privacy perspective, but not the practice of segregation.

My question is to the minister: What steps is this government taking to address the mistreatment of inmates, and what safeguards are being put into place for inmates in health segregation?

BRAD JOHNS: I do know that the correctional officers at the facilities continue to receive ongoing training. Specific to this particular case, I'm not aware, but I can certainly find out some more information and let the member know.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

### **DPW: COBEQUID PASS TOLL REMOVAL - UPDATE**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, recently I went to visit my daughter at CBU and drove past a lot of incredible construction twinning the highway around Antigonish. I'm so happy for the people there.

Meanwhile, back in Cumberland County, people are still paying an extra tax to drive on that same Trans-Canada Highway. The Premier has shared that he's going to remove the tolls.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Public Works today: What date can we expect the tolls and the extra tax to finally be removed for the people north of the Cobequid Pass?

HON. KIM MASLAND: I thank my honourable colleague for the question. I'd like to say that we have listened to Nova Scotians. September was the first step in our removal of the tolls. We gave the bondholders notice that we would pay them off. Last Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, we paid them off. I will tell the member opposite and all Nova Scotians, change is coming at the Cobequid. (Applause)

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you. We'd love to have a date. I get asked every day by people, like, when is it going to happen? He said it was going to happen, so why hasn't it happened yet?

I do want to officially ask the minister if I could be the one who drives the bulldozer or excavator to actually remove the pass.

In addition to the tolls, the people who live in the Wentworth Valley have been asking for the speed limit to be changed back to what it should be based on the classification of their road. When the pass was built, the speed limit was artificially lowered to entice people to pay the toll and go through the Pass. People are asking for that to be placed at the

same speed limit that anywhere else in Nova Scotia would be placed, based on the classification of their highway.

Can the minister give us, maybe, a peek into the exact date that we can expect the tolls to be removed, and also a commitment to put the speed limit back where it should be?

**KIM MASLAND:** Again, I thank my honourable colleague for the question. We have an interdepartmental committee right now in place. They're actually meeting again today. I'll be able to give you a date soon, but that committee is still working through the process.

It's not as simple as just switching off the light switch and everything goes away. There are safety issues, there are jobs - there's a lot involved in what happens when you're looking at removal of tolls.

As far as the speed limit goes, the member for Cumberland South has brought that to my attention, and we certainly can look at that.

**THE SPEAKER:** The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

#### **EECD: EDUCATION SPENDING - COMMITMENT**

**DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Education was always a priority for our government. Thanks to the significant investments we made into programs such as pre-Primary, which the current government opposed, Nova Scotia leads all provinces in education spending as a portion of GDP.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister commit to ensuring provincial education spending as a percentage of GDP will remain the same or increase under this government?

**HON. BECKY DRUHAN:** That seems to me to be a really unusual way to determine spending. I would expect and would apply the principle of looking to needs and determining spending based on that. That will be my approach. Whether that aligns with the numbers that the member has asked about, we'll just have to wait and see.

**DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE:** I asked the question because we're concerned, because previous governments cut.

When we came into power, we invested well over \$65 million in the program. We invested in inclusive education. We hired over 1,000 new teachers, and we signed a historic deal for an average of \$10-a-day child care for our children across Nova Scotia. I am

concerned about the response from the minister, and I'm concerned when the next budget comes what it means for our children in schools in Nova Scotia.

My follow-up question . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou has the floor.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Some forget they were in Opposition not that long ago asking these questions.

My next question to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is - we have signed a historic deal with the federal government that is considered the best in the country when it comes to providing child care for our children. Part of that was increased wages for our ECE workers across Nova Scotia. We provided a \$500 upfront payment as a sign of good faith . . .

THE SPEAKER: Question, please.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I'm looking for an update on the negotiations. My question to the minister is: When can the ECEs expect their wage increases?

BECKY DRUHAN: I am very proud to have taken the first operational step towards implementing that agreement with issuances of EOIs last week. We're really excited to continue that work towards implementing the agreement and ensuring that Nova Scotian children and families have access to quality, affordable, accessible child care. We are very committed to making sure that that happens.

I want to shout out to the department, which has done an incredible job standing up pre-Primary programs, which is the initial question that was asked; to the program providers for the work that they do; and also to the school teams for implementing a really different model, wrapping their arms around those kids. I just wanted to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to those groups because they have done a great job.

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

### **EECD: HAMMONDS PLAINS SCHOOLS BOUNDARY REV. - ENOUGH**

HON. BEN JESSOME: I have a few numbers for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development as well. Hammonds Plains Consolidated School has a capacity of 508 students. They presently have 617 students. Kingswood Elementary has a capacity of 625 students. They now have 899 students. Madeline Symonds has a capacity of 635 students. They now have an enrolment of 797 students. There are 16 portables across those three schools, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development if she feels that a boundary review with the new schools will be enough to alleviate the enrolment challenges in my community.

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: We have heard repeatedly about the needs of schools in growing communities. The member has my sympathy that the prior government didn't align the growth planning with the school's planning. I must say, though, that the department and the regions have done an incredible job of adapting to that by adding modulars to schools and doing planning around that.

I can say that our government is committed to growth. More than that, we're committed to supported growth. To that end, we have a cross-department committee that's planning strategically for growth. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is at that table, so we will make sure that continued growth and expansion happens with school planning in mind.

With respect to the question of boundary reviews, we are very hopeful that the boundary reviews will resolve current issues. We do expect to be rolling into boundary reviews in the very near future. Once that plays out, if there are continued needs, we'll look at those.

BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's consideration in that response. I think my follow-up question will be directed to the predominant question that I get from parents - mainly parents - related to the use of portables as a means to alleviate those challenges. While I appreciate that those can be a tool - those have been a tool since I was going to elementary school at Hammonds Plains Consolidated - the people in my community want to know that there are other options on the table.

Can the minister commit to using an alternative method other than portables to help alleviate some of these challenges?

BECKY DRUHAN: Yes, I acknowledge some of those portables have been around for years - eight years or more. I fully appreciate the desire and interest in seeing what alternatives exist. We have seen modulars added to great success. That's one option. I'm more than happy to meet with the member to talk about any of the specific issues around schools in his area so that we can share what's being done and what the options are.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

### **SLTC - LONG-TERM CARE: AGES - POLICIES**

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care. During the campaign, one of the best experiences I had was visiting the Northwood facility in my riding of Bedford South. I did get a chance to speak to a woman

there who's younger than most residents. She was actually in her early 40s and had been there for a few years. She told me she often felt alienated and alone and lonely, and that the system was not designed for people in her age group.

I would like to ask the minister: What policy or programs does the department follow to make sure Nova Scotians of all ages feel included in long-term care?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: I thank the member for that question. It's something that doesn't get talked about very often. My own cousin, after he was in a car accident, lived there for many years before he passed away. He was in his 30s. It is a problem; we fully recognize that. There aren't a lot of solutions on the table right this minute because the focus has been on older seniors, but across the province, we need to have a better strategy, especially considering that there are so many who have intellectual disabilities who are also looking at being moved out of the institutions into the community.

BRAEDON CLARK: I felt the same way. It was something that I had not considered, honestly, until I spoke to this woman, so I appreciate that.

My second question: I actually knocked on someone's door during the campaign as well. He was on his way out to see his wife, who was at a long-term care facility, I believe in the minister's constituency, actually, which is about 45 minutes away from where he lives, obviously a long way for him to go every day. I would just like to ask the minister: What is the policy? He has been working very hard to try to get his wife a bit closer to home. What is the policy to make sure that loved ones are kept as close to their loved ones as possible?

BARBARA ADAMS: The ability for people to transfer to a closer long-term care facility should have been expedited but it hasn't been. There are almost 2,000 people out of the almost 8,000 long-term care beds who are waiting to be moved to another facility. That is one of the top priorities of our department, to make those transfers happen much quicker.

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

#### **SNSIS - RESTAURANTS: THIRD PARTY DEL. - FEE CAP**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services. At the height of the third wave of the pandemic, I worked with restaurants to implement a cap on the fees that third-party delivery companies could charge. This has helped many restaurants survive the pandemic.

It's now clear that COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future and that many restaurants have no choice but to use or to continue using third-party delivery services to survive. However, when the state of emergency expires, restaurants will face



charges of up to 30 per cent to use these delivery apps. Will the minister commit to making the necessary regulatory and legislative changes to maintain this fee cap?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I appreciate the question from my colleague opposite. I haven't had a chance to get fully briefed on that particular issue, but it's certainly something I'll bring back to the department, get briefed, and have a chat with the member opposite.

[2:45 p.m.]

PATRICIA ARAB: To continue the camaraderie between me and my predecessor, I'm happy to help in any way that I can.

It's clear that the many great bars in this province are continuing to struggle. Prices are increasing. It's hard to find staff. Many people are still choosing to stay home due to the threat of COVID-19. Based on consultation with Nova Scotia bars and restaurants, our government allowed takeout cocktails during the state of emergency. This change helped cocktail-focused bars survive and regulations on what could be offered for takeout helped ensure safe consumption.

My question to the minister is: Is this a commitment the minister will make to reviewing again and possible reinstating?

COLTON LEBLANC: My understanding is that maybe the uptake on that particular program wasn't as high as expected, but certainly I'll have those ongoing discussions at the department and engage with my other colleagues around the Cabinet table.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

#### **NRR - GEORGES BANK: OIL/GAS MORATORIUM - LEGISLATION**

CLADIA CHENDER: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. As the minister knows, the moratorium on drilling for oil and gas on Georges Bank expires at the end of 2022. That moratorium has been in place for over three decades because successive governments have recognized that this lucrative, multi-species fishing ground must be protected from any possible pollution from oil and gas activities.

Mr. Speaker, many Nova Scotians are asking for clarity on this question. My question to the minister is: Will the minister commit to legislating a permanent moratorium on oil and gas activities on Georges Bank?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: It's a very important fishing ground, we know that. There is a moratorium that exists, but as I brought up in the House yesterday, it's a federal

and a provincial level discussion that has to take place to even extend that process that is going on right now.

I did commit to the House yesterday that I certainly am going to look into those details and I'll be happy to share that as soon as those conversations do take place.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: With respect, we're asking again because that assurance does not seem sufficient. We're asking for the minister to press the case of a permanent moratorium with whomever he needs to speak to at the federal level.

To go further, as mentioned earlier in this session, Nova Scotia is a mega-sponsor for an oil and gas conference taking place in Morocco this Spring. That conference explores geology that formed before Nova Scotia and Morocco separated millions of years ago.

In Nova Scotia the two areas of relevance for oil and gas in those geological formations are Sable, which we know is done, and Georges Basin, which the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board recently referred to as "underexplored."

Mr. Speaker, Georges Basin sits beneath Georges Bank. My question to the minister is: Does the minister really believe that we can protect the Bank while ushering in exploration in the Basin?

TORY RUSHTON: I'll reaffirm that we're committed to making sure that moratorium stays. I'm committed to having those conversations at the federal level and if the member opposite is curious about the sponsorship for the process that is going on in Morocco, we may ask the previous government, as it was a commitment in 2020, not in 2021.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

### **LSI - ISLAND EMPLOYMENT: CLOSURE - TRANSITION PLAN**

FRED TILLEY: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration. As we heard earlier, the Island Employment organization in Sydney has just been decimated. We not only have the workers who are out of work but also hundreds of files that are kind of in limbo right now.

My question I'd like to ask the minister is: What is the plan in transition for those hundreds of files for people who are needing that service? Also, with regard to the workers, was there a commitment to those workers that they will be moved to the new organization?

HON. JILL BALSER: I know how important this issue is for the community and for all Cape Bretoners. We want to just remind the folks who are working at the organization that we are, again, working very hard to have a new service provider in place.

Once that call for interest is closed, we are going to make sure there is a smooth transition because it's really important that there is no gap in services.

Again, under that new service provider, there will be positions. We really encourage the employees to make sure they take their talents to that new service provider.

FRED TILLEY: To the minister, in that answer I did not hear that the employees are guaranteed employment. What I heard was that they are encouraged to take their skills to that organization. So taking their skills to that organization, my question to the minister is: Can we get a guarantee from the minister that those employees will transition to the new organization?

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

### **OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading.

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: It is an honour to rise on the occasion of our single Opposition Day when the power is on and the internet works.

Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 26.

### **Bill No. 26 - Emergency "911" Act.**

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

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to our Bill No. 26, a series of amendments to the Emergency "911" Act that would create a province-wide emergency mental health service.

Mental health supports in Nova Scotia are insufficient. Despite the 2021 budget investing \$336.5 million into mental health, it represented just 6.3 per cent of total health care spending - far below the 10 per cent recommended by the WHO. This actually marked a drop from 6.7 per cent in 2020, showing the investment in mental health care is not keeping pace with overall demand. We need a strengthened mental health system in Nova

Scotia across the spectrum of acuity from mental health promotion to in-patient mandated care.

Building a different kind of mental health crisis response in Nova Scotia is a deeply personal endeavour for me. I have previously shared with members our struggles to find mental health services that worked for our family. Without shame, I can re-share with you the dozens of times we needed help to keep our family safe and the only option was to call 911. This was, in fact, step one on our official mental health crisis plan we had in place with the IWK.

Calling 911 to help your child through a mental health crisis is a devastating experience. The fear and chaos that necessitates the call is enough, then the concern is who will respond and how. In most of our experiences, paramedics would not enter to assess our son without police going in first.

So, let me just describe it to you. Your child has tried hard to manage through something else that most children can do - a day at school, a doctor's visit, a family walk in Point Pleasant Park. As parents, you have done everything you can to make the day a success - attending to food, water, sleep, comfort, and preparing with social storytelling. Yet your child is now experiencing extreme distress and the whole family needs help.

As we were parents of a small child, the vast majority of Halifax Regional Police officers who responded to us when we called 911 responded in a collaborative manner and wanted to work together to de-escalate the situation. Nonetheless, we relied on their good will as decision-making was removed from us and from our son.

Calling 911 never resulted in increased or more appropriate services. We often ended up in the IWK ER for hours and then were sent home with nothing new in place. In fact, I would say that for all of us, this repeated experience time and time again increased our overall stress and trauma.

For too long Halifax Regional Police was our mental health service provider, but I know that officers were always concerned about responding appropriately and deeply frustrated with a system that doesn't provide services once they were done their role.

Aside from the stories I can tell and the stories of so many other families that I have been entrusted with, why should all Nova Scotians care about this initiative? Why should all Nova Scotians care about improved mental health response? Firstly, we obviously want to build a mental health care system where these types of crises are greatly decreased through effective prevention, treatment, and care.

Many folks in mental health crisis end up being a cyclical caller because we have such limited mental health care resources in Nova Scotia. We need to break the cycle. Police do not want to be in situations where they have to use force against someone who

needs medical treatment. They clearly see the mismatch of need and response. Police presence can often escalate the situation. The knowledge that the police will come first is often a deterrent from seeking help when it is needed.

Finally, I would say that the increased contact with the police, and potentially the justice system, because of mental health crises, leads directly to the overrepresentation of undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues in incarcerated populations.

What do we have now in Nova Scotia? HRM has a Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team and with all due respect to the people and organizations that manage the program, I contest this name. It is not mobile. On a number of occasions, I have tried calling the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team. There's often no answer, or someone answers but no one is available to respond, or someone can talk on the phone but they can't come to the scene, or because of the level of mental health distress, uniformed police officers have to respond first.

You can see why I usually say it's not mobile, it's not a mental health service, and it certainly does not respond in crisis. I am so certain of my opinion that if we could use props, I would try calling now so we could see how the service does or doesn't work.

I have only had one positive interaction with the service, where a plainclothes mental health clinician came to our house and de-escalated a situation. That one time literally followed on weeks and months of advocacy by us to have a better response for our family, and it happened once. I also know that my family is privileged in that we live in urban Halifax, about five minutes from the IWK ER.

While I was in high school in Canning, my mom sought a restraining order against her ex-partner. I remember calling the RCMP detachment in New Minas and the officer being quite frank: we are 20 minutes away in the best-case scenario. That goes for anyone in rural Nova Scotia who is in crisis. Yes, there are mental health crisis lines, but they're not enough in a mental health crisis.

Despite their limited resources, as well, demand is increasing. This Spring, police in Cape Breton reported a 19.6 per cent increase in 911 calls in 2021 compared to the same period from 2020, with most of the calls related to domestic issues and mental health and addictions. I've tabled that article. Spring visits for mental health and addictions increased from 191 to 458 in the Central Zone, and other zones saw similar increases.

In our community, mental health wait times remain long. Remember, these are the services that will keep people out of crisis and keep communities safe. Wait times had a brief decrease in 2020, but there has been a rapid climb in wait times in 2021. You can see it for yourself on the Nova Scotia wait times website. Across child, adolescent, and adult mental health services, wait times are increasing to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Health zones have a target of seven days for urgent mental health care, and more or less, most zones aside from Eastern Zone meet this goal for 90 per cent of patients. The only thing is, this isn't the right goal. The Canadian Psychiatric Association and other evidence-based Canadian mental health initiatives stress that urgent mental health needs need to be addressed within 72 hours. Nova Scotia Health does not have the right targets.

For non-urgent adult care, with the exception of Yarmouth Regional clinics, 90 per cent of adults will be seen within a range of 42-85 days, and in Yarmouth Regional clinics, they lead the province with wait times of 20 days for 90 per cent of patients to have their first appointment.

For child and adolescent non-urgent care, the average provincewide wait is 75 days for 90 per cent of patients. I would suggest that 75 days is a long time for a child. It is conceivably a semester of school where you don't get to go to school. It's a whole sports season. It is quite literally a large percentage of their lifetime.

We don't have clear data from there. For instance, we don't know how long it is - or it's not publicly reported - from the first appointment, which is usually a brief assessment. Potentially a quick intervention, but not likely. We don't know how long you wait again. You get past the first appointment and you wait longer.

We have limited outcome data. We actually don't even know if what we are doing in terms of mental health services is working.

For emergency mental health response, I would actually suggest that there is a solution. The good news is that communities around the world are already working on building alternative crisis-response programs for mental health. Since Summer 2020, I have been part of the Reach Out Response Network, an international collective of people around the world that is working on alternative models of crisis response at the municipal, provincial, and state levels. Members come from diverse sectors, including mental health clinicians, law enforcement officers, paramedics, community members, and peers. They come from all over the world with a concentration in North America.

I may have lost track of all of the initiatives, but current Canadian jurisdictions looking to develop an alternative system include Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, and Victoria. The group meets bi-weekly and is collectively developing models, resources, and training to make the idea of rapid trauma-informed responses that reduce law enforcement encounters and reduce unnecessary emergency use.

Our plan put forth by this bill is to introduce an emergency mental health service in Nova Scotia that provides true crisis intervention, a model consistent with what mental health professionals, community organizations, anti-racist advocates, and police themselves have asked for. Training could be undertaken within the current 911 system to

develop the capacity to identify which calls can be responded to by a mental health crisis team.

[3:00 p.m.]

Most of the programs that exist or are in development have a goal of diverting 75 per cent of mental health 911 calls to a mental health team. Teams can include community paramedics who assess for medical and mental health emergencies. A clinician can attend to the client's mental health needs. A peer specialist with lived experience can help make the connection with clients to gain trust and move them to be more open to care.

Proposed services would be community-based. Behavioural health crises rarely exclude external material factors, so after the response call there is a need to follow up to connect clients to services such as treatment and housing.

We can do so much better in Nova Scotia - better use of our law enforcement and emergency services; better use of our mental health resources; better mental health. The fact is the existing mental health emergency support services are not good enough, and Nova Scotians deserve more. There are literally lives on the line. If the government agreed, they would vote to pass this bill into law today.

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

LORELEI NICOLL: I can see the newbies are like, who's first? I had this concern, I wanted to hear the minister speak, because I know in the mandate letter that he has a plan going forward to respond to mental health services.

My concern for a long time, given my background and my exposure to the 911 system, there are some efficiencies that need to be found within that system in itself, because now when you call 911, as we know, many first responders arrive. There are firefighters who arrive, the police arrive, and when it's a mental health situation, a lot of them are not trained to respond to that. In essence, I understand what is being discussed here today, but I was hoping to hear more from this government as to how they plan on doing this and how they plan on triaging it.

Fixing health care, the mental health part of it, is a big part of it. Some of them are going through the 911 system when they really should not be going through the 911 system. There's a way to get to that help that much sooner. We know, and as I said yesterday, I've experienced that myself and I'm grateful that I received the care that I did, but there are a lot of people who don't know where to get that help.

We have youth who call the Kids Help Phone to get that information as to where to go and everything else, so there are a lot of good things being done out there, but in a time

of crisis with your mental health, it would be nice to know what this government plans to do with regards responding to that urgent need when it's happening to the individual.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for the Office of Mental Health and Addictions.

HON. BRIAN COMER: Thank you to my colleagues for their words and their knowledgeable comments with this area.

First of all, I'd like to say that I think as a province and as a society we need to do better for every Nova Scotian living with addiction and mental health issues. I think we're definitely in agreement with that for sure. I recognize that for certain, having worked in the field for many years myself. I think our government recognizes this as well.

I work from the registered nurses' standpoint - in-patient mental health, addiction services, in-patient acute psychiatric services. Trust me when I say that I know people are really struggling across the province, and probably even worse after the pandemic, to be quite frank. That's one of the reasons I ran for public office in the first place, to be totally honest.

I think we're in agreement with that. I think there are a lot of great things we could probably do together. I sincerely mean that. I think this is why I'm the minister for the department. I think that says a lot for the prioritization we place on this very important issue.

It's very complex, I think, and we all could probably agree with that. I think there's been a real lack of focus on prevention and promotion with mental health and addictions for decades in the province, to be honest. I know there was mention of insufficient, kind of, budgetary resources also allocated for mental health and addictions in previous years.

I do think it's worth noting that our platform commitments are over \$100 million of an increase for addictions and mental health, which is very significant. That's something we can definitely build upon as we progress through my mandate, I would say.

I've been given the honour of the role to be responsible for addictions and mental health. When we look at this specific piece of legislation, I think when people reach a crisis point, these are very complex and very rapidly evolving situations.

I know there is the ability when someone calls 911 for a direct transfer to the mental health crisis line, where they're connected directly with a practitioner and triaged. That's how the process works.

I think that it's also worth noting that there are crisis response teams in all the regional hospitals across the province. Anyone in a true mental health crisis should be



getting the treatment that they need and deserve at that time. Are there gaps and insufficiencies with that? I would say probably there are. I think that's kind of what I'm going to try to improve as best as I can with my office.

There are mental health crisis urgent care teams across the province and at the IWK. These allow health professionals to address addictions and mental health issues as fast as they can, I would say. I know this specific piece of legislation looks at the Central Zone and the crisis mobile teams that can be dispatched.

Oftentimes, in my own experience I think a lot of times, these dispatching calls are often for wellness checks. Oftentimes, there's an overlap of addictions and mental health care and police services. Both parties have a bit of a lack of clarity in what the appropriate measures are. Safety is an issue for the person in question, for the family, and for the health care practitioners.

I think it's important to know that a critical part of my mandate is that there are supports for Nova Scotians at the right time when they need the supports so things don't escalate to a crisis in the first place. That's kind of where my head is at, to be honest. I think if you get someone in the Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 sort of situation the whole goal of that is to avoid the crisis. That being said, I know crisis will happen; unfortunately, it's inevitable.

Anyone of any age can experience an addiction or mental health crisis which is important. Right from youth right up to geriatrics - across the continuum. That's not something that's lost on me, that's for sure.

I know the provincial crisis line is available to support clients with addiction crises such as police or EHS services, primary care providers, guidance counsellors, and schools. I do think it's noteworthy that in my mandate letter, I do have an obligation to work with my colleague in education to develop an addictions curriculum in the public school system.

There's a real lack of knowledge and a lot of stigma associated with all of us and people as they get educated throughout our school system. It's a real lack of awareness that there's actually a lot of biology going on with addictions. It's not just the stigma of societal judgment.

I would say that it's clear that the needs of someone experiencing a mental health crisis requires special responses. I would say that I'm in the preliminary stages of exploring increased capacity for community-based treatment across the province.

I think a large part of that will involve me going to different parts of the province and actually meeting with the communities and the practitioners in this specific area. I think every community is different. I know I've reached out to all the MLAs in the Chamber; if you wanted to have me out for the day, I'd be willing to come. Especially because we know

that there are certain parts of the province that have specific needs and interests as opposed to others. I think that's very important.

I would like to note that the crisis line specifically is staffed by well-trained clinicians. They're equipped to deal with addiction and mental health crises. I think one of their primary objectives is to de-escalate symptoms temporarily, to get the person into the treatment that they need. In any kind of crisis situation, I would say that that's probably the primary kind of objective at the time.

In partnership with the federal government, I think the formulation of the three-digit crisis line is a real opportunity to give that single point of contact of service for someone in a true addictions and mental health crisis.

I was very excited to see that there's a federal minister now in charge of addictions and mental health and she's actually a former physician, as well, I think: Minister Bennett. I'm really excited to have ministers at both the provincial and federal levels. It's kind of the first time in both areas that that has happened, so I think there's a lot of potential there to do some really good things.

The implementation of the three-digit crisis line is very clearly stated in my mandate letter, along with increasing virtual care kind of capabilities. I think that's a significant portion of the mandate because with the three-digit crisis line, we'll have rural parts of the province that will need that virtual capacity, I guess you could say that, to have accessibility to the service, essentially.

This is a significant piece of work. There are two levels of government at play and the CRTC has a role to play as well. I know there was a three-digit line implemented in the United States, I believe within the last two years, and I think their call volume actually increased over 30 per cent, so there's an exponential increase in calls.

You need the staff accordingly, too, because you are going to get this massive influx. You also have to factor in the post-pandemic impacts on substance use and anxiety and financial hardships and all these other sorts of things. For a simple concept it is actually quite complex, to be honest, the three-digit line.

Just a couple of comments in regard to access. Everything I'm doing in the department is kind of focused on increased access - for youth, for seniors, for middle-aged people, for everyone. You've got to get increased access as quickly as possible. That's kind of what I'm thinking about every day.

I think we have an exciting opportunity with the universal addictions and mental health legislated objective that I have to carry out as part of my mandate. We'll be the first province in the country to do so, so it's a lot of work, a lot of pressure, a lot of accountability. I know that and I accept that, for sure.

I think we have a lot of work to do together and, like I said, if there are any comments or you think there's something you can contribute, I'm happy to speak and kind of do that sort of thing. Unfortunately, the piece of legislation here before us today kind of contradicts my mandate, to be quite frank, so I can't support it and the government can't, but thank you for your words.

**THE SPEAKER:** The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**SUZY HANSEN:** I just have to say one thing - well, no, I'm just going to keep saying it. Mental health is real. It's a serious situation for a lot of people. I just had to say that because it needs to be a priority. There needs to be something done immediately, not let's wait on things, and all these other pieces.

I'm going to go into my talk today and I have to say, Madam Speaker, it's an honour to rise today to speak to Bill No. 26, a series of amendments to the Emergency "911" Act that would create provincewide emergency mental health response teams. The bill requires the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to ensure that 911 is able to dispatch geographically-situated emergency mental health response teams across the province.

The minister can also delineate the expertise, training requirements, and composition of the teams and define the role of peace officers. Madam Speaker, this is a service that would save lives. When people who are in a mental health crisis call 911, they should do so knowing that they will be met by professionals who are equipped and ready to help and that they are safe in making that call.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, this is sadly not always the case and for too many people the intersection of mental health crisis and policing can be deadly. In the last 20 years, 460 Canadians have died in encounters with police and the overwhelming majority of those people struggled with mental health or substance abuse or both. Tragically, 42 per cent of individuals were mentally distressed at the time of their killing.

The situation is getting worse. The CBC reports that the rate at which people die in interactions with police has nearly doubled in the last 20 years. This investigation also found that Black and Indigenous people are overrepresented in these deaths. I'll table that. Tragically, we all know the names of too many of these Canadians. In April last year, D'Andre Campbell, a Black man living with schizophrenia, was killed by Toronto police after he called for mental health help. Weeks later, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a Black and Indigenous woman with ties to Nova Scotia, fell to her death from a Toronto balcony after police were called to her home to help.

A week after that, police in Edmundston, New Brunswick, fatally shot Chantel Moore, an Indigenous woman, after being asked to check on her well-being. Just weeks after that, Ejaz Ahmed Choudry, a Toronto man living with schizophrenia, was killed by Peel Regional Police after being called to check on his well-being.

[3:15 p.m.]

Closer to home, here in Halifax, a 28-year-old man died after police used a Taser on him. They were called to the premises after reports that the man was inflicting self-harm. In 2014 in Halifax, Mohammed Eshaq, who lived with schizophrenia, died after he fell from his balcony in the South End while police were in his apartment. They were called there by a nurse after concerns about his mental health care.

This deadly problem is acute for racialized people. We know that structural racism is baked into our justice and policing systems, and it is not a surprising outcome that so many people are met by harm when they desperately need professional help and de-escalation. This incredible problem means, first, that racialized people are at a higher risk of being criminalized, harmed, or killed in encounters with police when what they are seeking, and what they need, is help.

In March, we heard Emma Halpern, the Executive Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia, speak about this at a Standing Committee of Community Services meeting. She said:

“Over the last few years in our work, we’ve seen some very concerning trends. We see high numbers of African Nova Scotian and Indigenous girls engaged in our programming around trafficking and exploitation. We see the criminalization of trauma and victimization, particularly for African Nova Scotian and Indigenous women and girls. When police arrive, for example, on scene when an issue has occurred, we see young women and girls being identified as part of the ‘problem’ - being criminalized for small things rather than recognized for what is actually going on, which is their tremendous victimization and trauma.”

I will table that.

This trend of criminalizing people in crisis is fuelling the trend of overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous women in the justice system. It means that racialized people are less likely to seek help when they are in crisis if they know or suspect that police might be sent to the scene.

My volunteer work that I do, I’m a CMT member, and that means a Community Mobilization Team member. Community Mobilization is a community team that lead with a holistic approach to preparing and responding to violent or traumatic incidences. We work toward preventing violence by reducing distress, restoring unity, and building resilience. We work in collaboration with the Public Safety Office, HRM Municipal Services, Policing, and any other emergency service providers that are called to the scene

so that we can make sure that everyone around us is safe, and if there is something that needs to be addressed, we can do that directly.

I say all of this because I'm going to give you an example that happened in my own community - a youth experiencing a mental health crisis. A youth was triggered by something at home, whatever the situation was, which caused him to move all of his Mum's belongings - tables, chairs, TV, everything in the household - to the garbage. It was a bit of a step to the garbage bin, and this young person isn't big. He might have been maybe 150 pounds. He wouldn't stop when asked by his Mum.

Other community members were talking to this young person, and he wouldn't stop. That caused his Mum to react, because she was freaked out at the fact that her son was reacting to something and she had no idea. He wasn't harming anybody, he wasn't doing anything, but he was obviously experiencing a mental health crisis.

Mum reacted and came to see me and asked me to help her with this situation. I say this because Mum had to make the call to 911, obviously. It was a crisis situation happening, but she was super scared because her interactions with the police haven't always been positive. She was afraid that her son was going to be harmed.

I made the call. I took the phone from her. I said to 911 dispatch, "Please dispatch officers who actually have mental health training." Anybody who is experiencing mental health issues - especially young Black children or youth - when they see officers, they're going to respond, and it may not be positive. I stressed that to the officers when they got there.

When they came to the scene, they directly came over to me. I flagged them because the situation was happening. I called them over and I said, I just need you to know that this is what's going on - X, Y, and Z. I told them the situation: He's a really good kid. He's nice. He's kind. He's soft-hearted. He's going through something right now. I need you to go in there and reassure Mom, but as well, create a safe space for them to be able to deal with this situation.

That happened, and I was grateful. The officers who did that, who came on site, had training. They had specific training, whether it was mental health first aid - anything like that. They came in and they stayed for an hour with this young man. The young man was non-responding. He didn't talk. He didn't say anything. He sat in the bathroom with the door locked.

Obviously with our concern that maybe he might be hurting himself, I was able to go into the door and talk with him - non-responding, just looked through me and it was fine. The officers said, we have to leave, because we have other things that we have to do, but we understand that this is an important situation, and this is a phone number to call.

Mom called the mental health crisis line and had to leave a message. She couldn't have anybody call her back. Two days later, she was in panic again because he never left the bathroom for two days. She had asked me: Should I take him to the hospital? Absolutely. Have officers come and do the exact same situation. This time, when they come, have them talk to him. They had to take him out, obviously, in handcuffs, but they did it in an easy way where he wasn't responding and reacting.

Long story short, no help was given. He went to the hospital. He was seen. They told him that his mom would have to sign off her rights to him in order for them to do any type of assessments. Then they said that wasn't - back and forth. Regardless, it wasn't important enough because he wasn't speaking. He didn't talk. Normally he does talk, but he was in such a crisis that he didn't talk. Because they thought he was just not saying anything, they sent him to the shelter, because Mom said, I'm scared for my life. I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know where to send him. Can you keep him here? Can you have him assessed? They were like, there's nothing we can do for him here. They sent him to a shelter. This young man, to this day, I don't see, because I don't know where he is or what he's doing. Mom just prays daily for his care.

Another piece: In marginalized communities, in order for an ambulance to respond on site, police need to be present before responding. On many occasions during my responses as a CMT member, I've had to literally beg emergency services to come into the community because time of was of the essence.

I'm not going to go into any more of that, because we have limited time and I want to make sure that I get all the points in here.

This government has a responsibility to protect people seeking help in mental health crises and to enable alternatives for the thousands of Nova Scotians who find themselves in this position every year.

Madam Speaker, people deserve better access to mental health care in this province, including, and possibly most especially, when they are in crisis. That means making the appropriate emergency help available to people, not necessarily by police.

All of this is with a key demand of the Black Lives Matter movement: to defund the police. From Black Lives Matter Canada - I'll table that: "Taxpayers spend over \$41 million per day collectively on police services across the country. This does not include spending on the Canadian Security Intelligence Service," et cetera - customs, fisheries, blah, blah, blah - "We believe that Black communities, and all communities, deserve better. The \$41 million per day that is being spent on policing is not creating safer, more secure communities. This funding can be reallocated to create safer and more secure societies for all of us, and to rid Black and Indigenous communities of a serious threat to our safety."

Reallocating these resources and defunding the police means having systems set up that are safer and more appropriate. This is the spirit behind this bill. I urge my government colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, it is important to explain a little bit about what the movement to defund the police is about. It is about reallocating resources to community-based and other government organizations that are better equipped to deal with the roots of the non-violent issues that police are mostly called on to address such as homelessness, mental health, and addictions.

The police are the first to admit that they are increasingly called to address everything from potholes, cats in trees and all that good stuff. It is simply about ensuring that the best and the most appropriate help is deployed, that will work upstream to address the root of the problems people these days are experiencing.

Police have said they agree, they are not equipped to deal with the wide and complex range of mental health crises. Chief Dave MacNeil of the Truro Police Service said that mental health crisis - in regard to the mental health crisis response - that this isn't the type of work we signed on to do. Agreed. And it is not the type of work that we are actually trained to do. Absolutely. We don't call mental health clinicians to respond to break and enters but unfortunately the police are the kind of agency of last resort because they are the only 24/7 helping agency in most communities. I am going to table all this other stuff.

This means that it is really on this government's set of responsibilities to develop alternatives so the current dangerous and mismatched arrangement that is the case today for so many Nova Scotians in mental health crisis. Police shouldn't be the only 24/7 support agency in communities.

Supports need to include trained professionals who can do more than identify when someone is in distress. So as much as we value our youth workers, librarians, public library workers, Tim Hortons workers, teachers, CMT members, we as a government should have proper resources and people in place to do this important work for our province, which is why I call on all members of this House to correct this historic wrong and support Bill No. 26 with the same effort and gumption as all the other bills that were passed recently.

All Nova Scotians should be able to access appropriate mental health supports. So, please, I ask to pass this bill as it is a necessity for our province. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I want to thank my colleagues in the NDP caucus for bringing this bill forward and drawing attention to this important issue. It is certainly one that I am sure all of us here in this House see the need for significant

improvements and I am confident that the new minister is going to address those in his portfolio.

The first comment that I want to make in relation to this bill and 911 service in general is what we need in Cumberland North is we need to actually have cellphone coverage. There are pockets in Cumberland North where people cannot access 911 because they have no cellphone coverage. I would estimate probably 25 per cent of my constituency has no cellphone coverage. That is an estimate, Madam Speaker, but that is an estimate from me when I am driving because I am often on Bluetooth talking to people. I know the areas where there is no cellphone coverage. So that needs to be addressed.

Interestingly enough, we have not - I don't think we heard about improving internet or cellphone coverage yet by this government, yet it is a huge problem, definitely in rural Nova Scotia and definitely in Cumberland North. The first step is that we need to ensure that all people actually have access to 911 emergency services.

The second point that I will make there, and I know I do have colleagues who live in the Pictou area who have a similar problem and Colchester North where when they call 911 with their cellphone it goes to 911 in Prince Edward Island or sometimes in New Brunswick. Those provinces will then reroute the 911 call to Nova Scotia, but that creates a delay and in the time of fires or other urgent heart attacks, suicide ideation, minutes can save lives. So that also needs to be fixed.

I did address that with the former Minister of Municipal Affairs in the previous government and basically, he told me that I could deal with it with the service providers myself. I really didn't think that was a responsible response from the minister, because ensuring that all Nova Scotians have adequate 911 service is a responsibility of this government.

Specifically, when it comes to mental health, we all have gaps. There are huge, huge needs for improvement.

Recently, I wrote to Nova Scotia Health to ask for clarification of when is the mental health crisis team actually available in Amherst and Cumberland North. I did ask my assistant, Madam Speaker, to send this letter through to the library, and they're going to bring it in and I can table it. Is it okay if I just read a quote from . . .? I'll just read:

The Cumberland County urgent care team is available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The urgent care team is a multidisciplinary clinical team of three staff, social work and nursing, who provide crisis mental health and addiction assessments in the emergency department at Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre. They accept new referrals until 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.



[3:30 p.m.]

I wanted just to highlight - so if you have a life-threatening mental health condition after 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday until 8:00 a.m., or any time - 24 hours - on Saturday or Sunday, you have no access to the mental health crisis team. It's really unbelievable.

Recently I had a constituent actually attempt to take their life and they came to my office. I think my constituents know that I care about them very deeply. They know that I'm a nurse and they often will come and seek help when they're in distress, but that, Madam Speaker, was very upsetting and concerning for the welfare of this person. I'm here to tell you that this person did not have access to a mental health crisis team. I'm committed to working with the minister and anyone who will work with me to make improvements because it's wrong. It's just wrong.

When someone is taken to our emergency department, if it's after 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, or on a Saturday or a Sunday, they're often kept in a locked room with no furniture, no communication with staff except for bringing in food, whatever's the bare necessities. Family are not allowed to be with them, and they have to stay in this locked room until the emergency room physician or nurse can convince the psychiatrist in Truro or another psych hospital to do an assessment. Sometimes, Madam Speaker, that can take up to four to five days, where someone is in this locked room, and then they're often just discharged from Truro with no follow-up, no access to therapy, no access to counselling.

The thing is, this is just what's happening. This just literally happened three weeks ago to someone whom I know, and it's happening every day in this province. There are people dying because they don't have access to the care. Madam Speaker, if this same person had had a heart attack or a stroke or an abdominal aneurysm rupture, they would have been taken to the emergency department and they would have been seen by a specialist who is on call, in a shared on-call rotation, 24/7. Every attempt would have been made to save their life. The people with mental health and mental illness are not treated equitably. They're not treated with the same respect, and that needs to change.

Just last week, I had someone contact my office who is suffering from alcoholism. They said, I need help. We reached out, they reached out to addictions to get admitted to detox and they left a message. I asked my assistant a couple of days later, can you just follow up to make sure that person, that everything worked out? Their response was, no one returned their call. No one returned their call.

I just can't even believe that we are in this state and there are people dying needlessly in this province because of inadequate access to mental health care.

I do want to acknowledge the social workers and the psychologists and the psychiatrists that we do have working in our mental health system. I do know first-hand, from family and friends that have used their services, Madam Speaker, that they do their

best in a broken system. I do want to thank them for every effort they are making, but we do need to do better.

The system is resistant to change. I want to give an example: Back in 2002, I started a collaborative health clinic in Amherst. We had nine physicians, two registered nurses, a massage therapist, a dietitian. Before I opened that clinic, I travelled the province to look at different models of collaborative health care clinics because I said that whatever we do in Amherst I want to make sure that it's the best.

There was a clinic here in Cowie Hill, Madam Speaker, that had a shared mental health care program, I guess you'd call it. In their collaborative practice, in this shared mental health care, they had a psychiatrist who physically was at the collaborative care clinic once a month, so all of the patients that were referred by their family physicians were seen by a psychiatrist in their own clinic. They also had two therapists working right there with physicians, similar to how family practice nurses work with family doctors. They told me that on average, people waited one week to see the therapist - one week. In Amherst, at the time - and it hasn't changed - it was over a year to see a therapist. They said that the longest anyone would wait to see a therapist at this shared care mental health program was two weeks. That was the longest time if a family physician made a referral.

I brought that model back. I invited the psychiatrist who ran that program from Cowie Hill, I invited her to meet our team, including the psychiatrist in Amherst and the leaders there. They just wouldn't change, even though this is a model that is clearly working. My definition of "clearly working" is that the patients are getting better care. That's what we need to be measuring. It always has to be about the patient and the families and are they getting access to what they need.

There was a real resistance and that was back in 2002. No matter what we did, we were not able to convince the Health Authority at the time, or the people working in mental health, that we needed to move to this model.

We do need to have strong leadership and I shared with the minister for mental health now, he certainly has a large task at hand because sometimes the system is resistant to change.

I also want to mention that the stronger we can make our mental health primary care services with therapists, social workers, and psychologists, it will take a large burden off the family physicians. It's well documented that 80 per cent of the work that a family physician does - 80 per cent - is mental health-related. It may not be the first visit that they come in but as the physician meets with them. It's well-documented.

When you look at the intense need for family physicians in this province, if we were able to have therapists working directly with family physicians and if someone came in and they're in a marital crisis, a separation, or they are having parenting problems and

they are asking for help, instead of the physician spending 45 minutes with them, counselling, they would be able to say look, I can make a referral to the therapist, she or he can see you next week. There the physician is freed up to see another acute medical situation. The therapists and social workers and psychologists are part of the solution, even for improving access to family physicians and primary care in this province.

The last comment I want to make, Madam Speaker, is regarding law enforcement. The officers whom we have in Cumberland North, through the Town of Amherst and through the RCMP, do an incredible job. They are often asked to be therapists and they are often asked to be social workers and trying to fill in the gaps because the health care system is not doing its job. It's taking a toll on our law enforcement. We owe it to them to make sure that our health care system can provide health care, and they can do their job in law enforcement and not trying to be therapists and social workers in our community.

I'll finish off by thanking again my colleagues in the NDP caucus for bringing this forward and certainly I support this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Madam Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 26.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn the debate.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 19.

**Bill No. 19 - Owls Head Act.**

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

GARY BURRILL: I'm pleased to speak to Bill No. 19, the Owls Head Act, this afternoon. The Owls Head Act, or more formally, An Act Respecting Parks and Protected Areas, is in fact a series of modifications to three pieces of legislation concerning protected lands in Nova Scotia - the Provincial Parks Act, the Special Places Protection Act, and the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. It provides, very simply, that where land has been provisionally granted protection or been designated for protection, it may not have that designation removed without a process of public consultation.

The purpose of Bill No. 19 is therefore to guarantee that in future, no protected or designated lands may ever be removed or delisted from that designation in a secret, hidden, or surreptitious way, such as was the case with the Liberal government's disposition of Owls Head Provincial Park.

If ever there were a piece of Opposition legislation that recommends itself to the government's support, surely this might be it. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Premier, in his former capacity as Opposition Leader, had matched the NDP's condemnations of what was done to Owls Head blow for blow, referring to the absence of due process there as, I believe at one point he put it, "despicable." The Owls Head Act provides the government this afternoon with an opportunity to plug a democratic loophole so that protected lands in future are always dealt with more transparency and visibility to the public.

[3:45 p.m.]

Madam Speaker, people will recall that the whole issue of the delisting of Owls Head Provincial Park never came to public light at all until an enterprising reporter determined that some time previous, the Cabinet had prepared the land for potential sale to an American developer of a golf course by means of a confidential Cabinet mechanism called a "minute letter." No sooner had the public had a chance to take this fact in than it was revealed that this process had taken place in the context of private meetings between members of the government and a former Liberal Cabinet minister, Michel Samson, whose stated agenda for these conversations, the provincial lobbyist registry revealed, was, "acquisition of and access to Crown land for Lighthouse Links" - that was the golf course developer.

If I were the new government, I would take the opportunity of the Owls Head Act being debated today to support it and pass it and thereby have an opportunity to distance themselves as much as possible from the absence of transparency to do with Owls Head, which they had joined previously in condemning. Not just the transparency - absent also from what happened at Owls Head was any sense of the adequate regard and respect for the public voice, for community consultation.

Owls Head didn't just appear on the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan a week or two before it landed there. It had been understood on the Eastern Shore to be a park, a public park belonging to the people of Nova Scotia, for at least 45 years. Its place on the Parks and Protected Areas Plan was developed out of decades of that organic understanding and community consultation. It was over 40 years ago, in June 1980, in Volume 4, No. 24 of *Conservation*, a then-quarterly publication of the Department of Lands and Forests, that Owls Head was included in the Eastern Shore Park System Master Plan.

During the 2009 Colin Stewart Forest Forum and the 2011 12 per cent lands review process, over 2,000 written submissions were brought forward. Input was received from hundreds of people at 17 public open house sessions. In 2012, Owls Head Provincial Park

appeared in the Provincial Parks and Park Reserves map series of the department. Until the park was surreptitiously removed from the mapping of the department following the breaking publicly of this story, Owls Head also appeared on the online Department of Lands and Forestry map titled Parks and Protected Areas - a System for Nova Scotia.

It was out of all this extensive community consultative background that Owls Head was then listed on the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan list, which was developed out of an extensive and historic consultation and which was then passed over and disregarded with the appearance of the minute letter, to which I previously referred, by which Owls Head was removed from the designated list.

Madam Speaker, the Owls Head Act is particularly relevant in this moment when land protection has become a matter of such importance because there is a wide range of areas across Nova Scotia which are in a similar situation to that which Owls Head had been in prior to its delisting. That is areas which have been on a list of places under pending protection for some years and which, without the protections of the Owls Head Act, are similarly in a vulnerable situation. Among them are the Mersey River Provincial Park, Pomquet Beach Provincial Park, Monk's Head Provincial Park and Blue Sea Beach Provincial Park. Wilderness areas such as the Economy River Wilderness Area and the St. Andrews River Wilderness Area are in a parallel situation, as are the Glen Brook Nature Reserve and the Mulgrave Hills Nature Reserve.

There are still over 150 areas that are not legally protected in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan. The people of Nova Scotia deserve to know that if there's any change to the pending status of those areas and that pending status, that change cannot be made without the broad, respectful, public consultation by which these areas were put forward for various forms of protection on that list in the first place.

Madam Speaker, it is a significant moment in which the present government could enact the provisions of the Owls Head Act. The government at this moment is before the House with its Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act. An important component of this Act, of course, is its goals and its provisions on this very subject, land protection.

Now in the NDP, as we will be speaking about directly, we think that these goals could be properly strengthened. We support a land protection goal of 30 per cent by 2030 with an interim goal of 25 per cent by 2025, and we support the immediate protection of all the designated lands in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan, including Owls Head. In these matters, we differ from the government, which has put forward a more modest goal and a goal which does not come complete with interim steps by which to get there. We share with the government the view that it is very important that those land protection goals, as in that piece of legislation, ought to be in that legislation. It is true that in that legislation's previous iteration, they were not.

It's an important thing because legislation is an open, visible, public matter. You cannot change legislation in our system behind closed doors. By its definition, all legislation is there for all to consider. All legislation is there for all to see.

This is precisely the principle that the Owls Head Act brings to the range of legislation that covers various types of land protection in Nova Scotia: the principle, namely, that land protection is too important for official changes in the status of designated, or pending designated, properties to be able to take place without the transparency and respect for the public voice that are required.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: It's a very important bill and I just want to take a few minutes to speak on this.

There are a few things that I want to clear up. First, what the member to my left has said, especially around the list of protected properties - the hundreds and hundreds of protected properties - that was put in under the NDP government.

The thing was that they had five years to protect these properties and they did not. They scrambled at the last moment before the 2013 election to put together a list of properties because they were being challenged publicly on their environmental backbone. They had an opportunity to protect this land and so much more, and they chose not to.

One of their biggest accomplishments - they did some great stuff - and I have lots of respect for the former Premier whom I know quite well, Darrell Dexter - but the Leader of the NDP was part of that government, a prominent part of that government. So we can't erase history here. We can't say that things happened, or didn't happen, and they had nothing to do with it.

Bowater's one of their greatest accomplishments. They tout Bowater and the saving of all that Crown land. They're taking this private land and turning it into Crown land. I would challenge anyone here, especially who knows the forest industry, to go and see how much of that Crown land that they protected and celebrated, and that they cut. They allowed to be cut.

It's one thing to say you are an environmentalist and you're here to protect the planet. It's another thing to actually do it. The members are agreeing that I'm right on this. That's great to know. So their greatest environmental land protection accomplishment was actually saving land and then transferring it over to be clear-cut. It doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

I'll get into why we support this bill. I just envision in my mind - I'm very imaginative - days, weeks, minutes, hours before the election maybe an email goes out

scrambling and saying to grab the land quickly, we need to find something that gets the people back on our side. Then hundreds and hundreds of submissions came in and they just threw it on a list and said there it is, but nothing happened with it.

I would put our environmental background and the achievements up against anyone. MV Miner was something that we took great pride in cleaning. Pictou Landing First Nations and the environmental racism that happened there and was there under previous governments that did nothing, nothing for those people, for those communities.

In my own backyard, the RDM - no, sorry C&D site in Harrietsfield. We begged the former government to do something, please. Not a thing. The Liberal government gets in and those decisions are made, money is spent, and people get the government - the environmental government they deserve.

One of the things I will say about Owls Head is that there was no - quite simply, there was no commitment to sell it off. Cabinet did not proceed with that. That is misinformation, and I see the member shaking his head over there. I'd tell him to table the documents if he has them. That's misinformation that was put through during the election. It was an election ploy from members. What was asked is quite simply public consultation.

The former Premier of this province, the member for Timberlea-Prospect, one of the biggest environmentalists I know and one of the reasons why I supported him was his stance on coastal protection, his stance on the environment, his stance on land protection. I am hearing a lot of chirping, Madam Speaker, and especially from the NDP side and, respectfully, when they stood up to speak, we didn't say a word. So we would ask for the same.

Consultation was to be had. Indigenous consultation was to be had. It would not - the sale of that land would not be approved - would not be approved - without significant public consultation. People needed to have their voices heard on all sides, and for members who may shake their heads or think that's not true, I will take you back to early years of the Liberal government that ran the fracking situation. A large percentage of this province didn't want it and a percentage of this province wanted it.

It would have been quite easy and quite simple just to say no, we are not doing it. So, what did we do? We went to the public. We allowed the process to take place. We allowed people to have their voices heard and, in the end, we heard loud and clear from the people of Nova Scotia that fracking was not something they wanted. Again, previous governments and their claim to be environmentalists could have done something about fracking but chose not to, I think, because they felt it was a pretty divisive issue. We went to the public; we listened to the public. There were public consultations held and the decision was made to move away from fracking.

I think it is important that we listen to people and we look at options. I am not saying that you have to support everything, and listening to people does not mean you have to support the options that are put in front of you. It means that you actually listen to them and you let them have their say on all sides, no matter if they agree or not. I mean, this is democracy.

People approach me all the time with ideas that I just don't agree with - fundamentally don't agree with - but you listen to them. You hear them out and then you make a decision. A good leader makes a decision based on consultation and listening to the public. It was very difficult to have that conversation and to get to a point where - not just on Owls Head but on many different things - where we can have that debate in the public when members of the Legislature are villainizing individuals left, right, and centre. It's one thing to villainize an MLA because I guess that's expected, but it is another thing to members of the public - members of the public whom you've never met, quite frankly. I know that's not something I'm in the practice of doing, whether I agree with somebody or not. It did not become an issue for the NDP in particular until an election was looming.

[4:00 p.m.]

I go back to their five years in power, and I think one of the things that people had hoped to see from that former government was more protection, more land conservation. We had the Purcell's Cove Backlands as a great example in my own community. It took the Liberal government - the former Liberal government - and HRM and different stakeholders in the community to come together to finally protect that land, to make that option available.

My experience before being an MLA was like kind of beating your head off the wall on some of these important projects, some of these important issues for the public. Listen, Madam Speaker, I understand. I understand that there are a lot of things on the government's plate and there are a lot of pressures on them, and sometimes these things get pushed to the side, but they don't get pushed to the side in communities.

I think most people should have a right to have their voices heard. I would have liked to hear a robust conversation on the subject. I think we know - it's clear - I know for my community, I went and talked to people from all sides on this issue. It was very clear in my community where people stood, and I represent the people in my community, so we have to represent their wishes and their views.

We had heard from other members - not just on the government side, but on the Opposition side - that there were some concerns coming in, and people would like to have their voices heard. I think what happened was instead of acting in a true democratic fashion and allowing all voices to be heard, we rushed out, or individuals rushed out, and silenced or plugged their ears to different opinions and views.



I do think this bill is a good bill. I think that we need to have an open process, and there needs to be more consultation, but the process can't just be one-sided. The consultation can't be one-sided. That's what I would remind some members of the House of.

I know where I stand, and I know where the people of my community stand. I would hope that when they're thinking of this bill, they're thinking of everybody. We've got to be able to have mature debate on difficult topics without name-calling and villainizing and turning people against each other. That seems to be the norm now with a lot of topics. We don't want to sit in a room and have a discussion. We want to point fingers and say you're wrong and I'm right and that's it.

I kind of blame social media a bit for that. I think people get caught up in their own little circles and that's it.

I do respect the member for Halifax Chebucto and the bill that he's brought forward, and we're going to support this bill. We're going to support this bill. We think it's a good bill. But I just want to remind people that when we're having these conversations, we've got to be able to listen to all sides. I truly believe that democracy works, and the voice of the people will rise through it all.

We have seen that from the fracking issue. We have seen that from the environmental racism in Pictou. We have seen it with that issue where very few people in this Legislature spoke up on it; in fact, outside of government and a couple of members in this Legislature, very few people spoke up on it. Yes, there were members from different Parties who spoke up on it, but I would think that this would have been an issue that brought everybody together.

I want to thank the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto, who has been here quite a while and has done a fantastic job in his role. I want to thank you for bringing this forward, and we will be supporting it.

**THE SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

**HON. TORY RUSHTON:** I thank the members opposite for the conversation on Bill No. 19. Just to make a few points, respectfully. I know exactly where our Party stood during the election on this issue. I know exactly where my colleague the former Environment critic stood on it when the issue came to him and there were questions asked in this very Chamber a number of years back.

We certainly disagreed with how the process started with this. We certainly made the bold statement that when we formed government, we would certainly look into what the previous government had signed and agreed to with that process. In respect of the whole process, we do know, Madam Speaker, that right now that is in an appeal process.

When we go back and speak as department representatives and as ministers, we certainly take legal advice very, very strongly. I'm going to try very strongly, as we go through the discussion today, to stay away from the idea and the process and how we got there.

I do want to speak about the bill at hand. Outside of the title of the bill, there certainly are great aspects in that bill that I don't think that anybody in this Chamber could debate. One of my first questions or briefings that we had in and around protected lands and how lands get there and how lands could potentially come off, it was very evident to me that there was a bit of cloudiness in and around that aspect, how lands could come and go and how it could disappear without formal notice, how it gets off the wish list - if you will - to an actual protected list and the whole process.

I know that I have had a few conversations with the previous Minister of Lands and Forestry when I was critic. There's a commitment in this House. We may debate on the percentage of protected lands, but there's a commitment throughout this House that as a whole body, as the elected representatives of Nova Scotia, we have to do better for our lands. We as a government have said we can protect lands, but we can also have an economy and a robust sustainable land asset within our Crown lands. I just wanted to recognize that.

I also wanted to take a minute to recognize the dedicated staff who do work behind the scenes to allow these lands to be protected, to do the studies to see how it goes to the next level. They're very much dedicated to the Province of Nova Scotia. No matter what government sits on this side of the House, their work continues. They continue to brief the minister of the day on the aspect of where their studies have brought them to, and it's up to the elected officials - the minister and the government of the day - to make those decisions. I just want to take that minute to recognize the provincial staff who are certainly supporting all the ministers who are here today, and previously.

Just a few aspects about Crown land and the land that makes up Nova Scotia - Crown land essentially belongs to the people of Nova Scotia. I know it's called Crown land, but it belongs to the people of Nova Scotia. As stewards of our departments, it's our duty to ensure our lands are fostered the way that Nova Scotians want. Our land makeup is that about 70 per cent of Nova Scotia is private lands. That leaves 30 per cent of Crown lands to be allocated. This is a vast difference than what we see in B.C. or Quebec, or even in Newfoundland and Labrador, where up to 90 per cent of the land mass is Crown land.

We could debate the goals of what we want in a percentage of a protected area, but we're very adamant in the bills that we presented and the mandate letters that the Premier has given to me and other ministers. There needs to be that protection aspect. I firmly believe we can achieve the protection aspect through lands and waterways, but the protection of it is for the betterment of our climate and to ensure that there is a future of Nova Scotia for our next generations to come.

It's very clear in my mandate letter that 20 per cent will be achieved in protecting the total land mass by 2030. There is a list of parks and protected areas. There are about 100 sites that are remaining on this plan and each site is unique. As you go and look at each site, there are different aspects and studies that have to go into each piece of land - different consultations

When I was critic, I think I criticized the former Minister of Lands and Forestry many times - or the Leader of the Official Opposition; I know that I'm going to get rebuttal with that - did you do enough stakeholder consultation? I expect that. Our government wants to be held up to the highest critique level of this province to ensure that we are doing the job that we were elected to do and to ensure that we're doing what has been set out in our mandate letters from the Premier.

Staff are reviewing many areas. Implementation will take place throughout what is already being written into this, already things that our department has set forward for the protection of lands. Credit where credit is due: some of that was done by the NDP government. The Liberal government took over and bettered it. It's our job as the government to better that process.

I go back to the statement that I made when I first opened my remarks. One of my first conversations when I had a briefing on protected lands was, how can there be so much cloudiness? How can the public have so many different opinions on one issue, such as the title of this bill?

There was never ever a public consultation process done. Can we go out and talk to every single Nova Scotian? No, but we do have process. There is a process to follow and I'm encouraging staff to come back to me on how we can better that process. How can we have a process for how that land gets on a wish list? How can we have a process on how that land moves to becoming a protected area?

Staff have told me that on those long lists of lands, there are lands there that don't actually meet the criteria that were put on back in the '50s. They don't necessarily meet the criteria anymore. Are we going to just take that off as a government? No. There has to be a process and public consultation has to be included in that.

Government has several tools to protect land. These include different types of designations. I appreciate the Leader of the New Democratic Party for bringing it up. There are wilderness protected areas, of which Nova Scotia has over 70 areas. A wonderful example of this is the French River Wilderness Area.

We have nature reserves that have the highest level of protection for unique and rare species or features. Provincial parks, which I know that every single one of us heard about when we were campaigning: the want for parks to be expanded and parks to be further developed. I'm certainly going to look at this as the minister. I know that I've had

many questions in my years in this House about the parks that we find in the Cumberland area that are being, since the COVID-19 times, more utilized.

We should be very proud of it. We have a lot of uniqueness here in Nova Scotia. Every chance I get, I speak about the UNESCO geopark that runs from Cumberland County to Colchester. I know my Colchester counterparts would argue that it runs from Colchester to Cumberland County. The fact remains that we have a UNESCO geopark right here in Nova Scotia.

It was announced on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, during the pandemic. It's a storybook of beautiful scenic areas that are shared along our coastline on the Fundy Shore. I say that that book hasn't even had a chance to be opened up yet because of the pandemic. It's a unique area to our Nova Scotia heritage, the history of Nova Scotia. It's showcased. Some of those scenes are in areas that can be protected, that can be put on a list.

[4:15 p.m.]

My point in talking about the UNESCO geopark is that it wasn't just one body that decided, hmm, we're going to do a geopark. It was multiple levels of government. It was multiple levels of consultation and many years of hard work of the Municipalities of Colchester and Cumberland and many years of dedication from the provincial and federal levels of government.

My point is that there has to be collaboration. There has to be process. In order to get designated as a UNESCO geopark, there was a process followed. That process is - to come up with the topic at hand of protecting lands, there are legal aspects on achieving that. There are several steps that need to be taken. Staff at both my department and the Department of Environment and Climate Change are working collaboratively to identify some of those areas.

Values that we consider as a government are remote large areas; mostly natural state, with few human contacts or impacts; and representative examples of full-spectrum Nova Scotia landscapes. As a government, we recognize the fact that we want to recognize the utilization of recreational aspects on our Crown lands.

It's not just about protection of lands and aspects. We know that we have a vast forestry industry, and we're moving on to the Lahey model of how ecological forestry is done. That was started by the previous government. We're taking the reins on it. We're going to move forward on that.

I know I had a discussion with the Leader of the Official Opposition on how the management guide actually has started to be implemented. There's been a little bit of debate in the House the past few weeks whether that has been implemented or not. There's a whole vast usage of our Crown lands. Yes, our government is committed to having a

sustainable resource within our Crown lands. Our government is committed to the recreational facility use of our Crown lands. Our government is committed to protecting the lands.

Part of what's in this bill - as I've stated before, we are committed as government to some of those aspects, and some of those aspects in the bill that the NDP have tabled have certainly started to take shape within our government, within our mandate letters. I greatly appreciate the NDP doing their job to hold government to account, to ensure that we're moving through the steps to protect land in the proper way, and understand that we're going to have a process.

I look forward to my colleagues opposite in their Critic roles to have conversations to ensure that these protected lands are going to move forward with a process and give government the tools that they need to work with and have stakeholder consultation, so that at the end of the day, the public does have their say.

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

The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party

GARY BURRILL: I move second reading of Bill No. 19.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a call for a recorded vote.

We will ring the bells until the Whips are satisfied.

[4:19 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The motion is for a recorded vote. Are the Whips satisfied?

Before we proceed with the recorded vote, I'll just remind all members to remain completely silent while the Clerks record your vote. I'll remind all members to stand up with a simple "yea" or "nay."

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[5:21 p.m.]

**YEAS**

Hon. Patricia Arab  
Hon. Tony Ince  
Angela Simmonds  
Hon. Zach Churchill  
Hon. Iain Rankin  
Hon. Derek Mombourquette  
Claudia Chender  
Gary Burrill  
Susan Leblanc  
Lisa Lachance  
Suzy Hansen  
Kendra Coombes  
Rafah DiCostanzo  
Ali Duale  
Lorelei Nicoll  
Hon. Keith Irving  
Hon. Brendan Maguire  
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin  
Carman Kerr  
Braedon Clark  
Fred Tilley  
Ronnie LeBlanc

**NAYS**

Hon. Brad Johns  
Hon. Tory Rushton  
Hon. Barbara Adams  
Hon. Kim Masland  
Hon. Allan MacMaster  
Hon. Karla MacFarlane  
Hon. Michelle Thompson  
Hon. Pat Dunn  
Hon. Tim Halman  
Hon. Steve Craig  
Dave Ritcey  
Hon. Brian Wong  
Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek  
Hon. Brian Comer  
Hon. Colton LeBlanc  
Hon. Jill Balser  
Trevor Boudreau  
Hon. Greg Morrow  
Hon. Becky Druhan  
Larry Harrison  
Chris Palmer  
John A. MacDonald  
Melissa Sheehy-Richard  
John White  
Danielle Barkhouse  
Tom Taggart  
Nolan Young  
Kent Smith

THE CLERK: For, 22. Against, 28.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.

The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Opposition business for today. I'll turn things over to the Government House Leader.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to now move into the moment of interruption and conduct the Adjournment Debate before proceeding to Government Business.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for unanimous consent to move into the moment of interruption prior to finishing the day's business.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Our topic this evening is moved by the honourable MLA for Sydney-Membertou:

“Whereas the Nova Scotia government is committed to phasing out coal by 2030 and it is crucial that workers in communities are at the heart of the transition with training, skills development, jobs in renewable energy, and opportunities in the green economy.

Therefore be it resolved the government will focus on equity by ensuring communities that have traditionally been left out of the energy transition have the opportunity for skills training and new careers and jobs in the green economy.”

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

### **GOV'T. (N.S.): OPP. FOR SKILLS TRAINING AND JOBS IN GREEN ECONOMY FOR DISPLACED COAL WORKERS - NEED TO ENSURE**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I am honoured to rise in my place tonight to talk for a few minutes about the motion that we put forward for debate. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues across the floor, and also I look forward to hearing from my fellow Cape Bretoner, who would have probably the most experience and training or one of them in this House in his previous role as principal with the Community College.

Essentially, for us this is something that has been very important to us when we were in government. Now government is moving forward with their legislation.

I am not sure if I am allowed to talk about that in Adjournment debate. I think I am allowed under the rules. Can I get clarification on that, just quickly? Am I allowed to talk about a bill on the floor? I am seeing him shake his head. That's fine.

THE SPEAKER: No.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: No, that's fine. What I will say is this: Every party is very consistent on ultimately what our ambitions are to help promote a healthier Nova Scotia. We know that the transition from coal and more traditional energy resources is happening and that governments are making decisions based on that. A lot of that is being directed by market conditions more than anything else, but of course, government is going to adjust.

I had the privilege of being the Minister of Energy and Mines formerly, which is now the Ministry of Natural Resources and Renewables. I had the opportunity over a couple of years to see first-hand some of the changes that have been made to help promote the work that we're doing in Nova Scotia, continuing to be an international leader in GHG reduction, but also looking at what the future held. There was a concern particularly coming out of rural Nova Scotia and communities outside of HRM about what that energy transition looked like and what that meant for the hundreds of employees who may have been employed with various companies or organizations in the traditional energy sector.

This is something that's important for us at home. It's important in other communities across Nova Scotia. It's not just about training or retraining workers who worked in the traditional industries: It's also about the opportunities that are going to present themselves moving forward, based on the larger infrastructure projects, whether it's around the Atlantic Loop or other significant projects that may come forward from Nova Scotia Power or other players but also the opportunities that multi-party governments brought forward over the years.

I said it in the conversation we had when we had an emergency debate in our time during government, that the conversation about the environment and the work that the Nova Scotia government has done and will continue to do spans over multiple governments. All of us can stand in our place and take some sort of - I don't want to say credit - acknowledgement that we all have done the work.

I forgot it is only 10 minutes, so I had better get into it. I do want to say this: Ultimately what we have done as a government is, we have put a lot of programs in place that are going to help support many Nova Scotians who want to get into the green energy economy.

As I said, we expanded our solar program. The solar rebate is important. We are now the number one jurisdiction in Canada for solar because of that program. We need to keep that program going. We went from 16 to 70 companies in one year. We have a six-month wait list. There is lots of work, so that incentive is important.

We've expanded all of our efficiency programs to ensure that - generally, houses that qualified for the program initially were heated by electric sources. Now we've expanded it for wood sources and all other heating sources. That, again, allowed us to really



expand the opportunities for people to get into the green energy sector, whether they were transitioning from a traditional sector to the clean energy future that is before us.

[5:30 p.m.]

Those programs are important. We expanded all of them for a reason. This is where the school system comes in. I think the school system plays a very significant part in this. The deal that we signed with the 13 Mi'kmaq communities - 2,500 homes will be retrofitted, \$40 million - that is a significant opportunity for our students in those communities and for people to become entrepreneurs. Those communities should be doing the work, and we have an opportunity and the foundation set up, whether it's through the P to 12 system or whether it's through the community college, to train those students, train folks who want to go back and do that work.

There are a number of initiatives on the forestry side, so the list goes on and on.

Again, I'll go back to the concern that we have at home. We know that the transition is happening. There's no question. We see the potential for wind - my Leader talked about it a lot during his time as Premier, and market conditions are still dictating that wind is really the cheapest form of energy consumption right now, so we're going to see more of it. There's no question.

Offshore is going to get to a point where it becomes more viable too. In my time as Energy and Mines Minister we had a number of companies - whether it was in the Strait, off the coast of Cape Breton, and in the South Shore off of Bridgewater, these spots have been mapped out already for potential areas where we can look at offshore winds. We know that's going to happen.

We know that other methods - solar continues to decrease. We know that electric cars are eventually - within years, they are going to be on a par with your standard combustion cars. All of these are opportunities, but particularly what is a concern - and it is. It's a concern for rural Nova Scotia that they don't really see themselves as much in this conversation. They are communities that traditionally have been built, like at home - and Mr. Speaker, you know this as well as anyone - these are traditional industry homes, our communities.

I come from - well, how many mines do we have in Cape Breton? We were a coal-mining town. We generated our electricity off coal. So we've moving off of coal, and now what is the plan for those workers - who understand.

I'll give Nova Scotia Power credit - when I was in Energy and Mines, we talked about this early on, because there was a lot of conversation around the Atlantic Loop. We said, before we even start the conversation, what is the transition plan for those workers? They need to see a path.

It was 2020 at the time, and say we legitimately have 10 years to figure this out, especially with what we knew was going to be happening, is that instead of waiting until the last minute and waiting until 2025 or 2026, we have an opportunity to do it now - retrain those people and give them other opportunities and make sure, because it is not only an impact on them. The supply chain also takes a big impact.

As somebody who used to be in that supply chain when I ran my own business, these matter in communities outside of HRM, in rural Nova Scotia. So really where we see government as they go down this path towards the elimination of coal is ensuring that if the federal government doesn't come in with some sort of package - and it has to be in the millions, in my opinion, because this was all part of the negotiation we were in before the election - it has to be a package that is in the millions, that is substantial enough to really give these workers the training they need and the support they need and the options they need to make that transition.

The number that we use, and he just said it to me here - the Leader was - it's over \$100 million. That was the number we were talking about that we thought was substantial enough to really support these hundreds of workers who are in our traditional energy production industries that are going to have to change.

In my last minute and 30 seconds, there have been a lot of great opportunities that we have developed. This government will have their own, and I appreciate the conversations with both the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, because I think they see the opportunities, too.

As I said early on, a lot of our success in becoming a leader internationally in Nova Scotia is that we all fed off of one another. It didn't matter who was in government at the time. You talk about some of the legislation they brought back in the mid-2000s and it just flows into what we've done.

As a government, I'm very proud of our record. As a result of the initiatives that we've taken, the legislation that we passed, and the partnerships that we had with the sector, Nova Scotia was recognized as one of the international leaders and still is. That's not going to change. We just need to continue that momentum, and there's lots of opportunity, not only for our traditional workers, who desperately - we really need to have this conversation right now. It's not too often where you have an opportunity where you have 10 years to get something right, but we need to do that. We also have so many opportunities for our students, through our school system, and so many opportunities to create a whole new generation of entrepreneurs within the province.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and I look forward to the comments from my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Thank you to the member for bringing this debate to the floor of the House. We feel quite passionately about this topic and about the general notion of a just transition and would concur with many of my colleague's comments. I want to talk for a minute about the notion of green jobs generally.

When we think about green jobs, we often think about them in the mode in which my colleague was speaking, which is absolutely correct. What are the sectors of the economy that will be unlocked by our transition to a cleaner economy? I think it's widely recognized now that that's only one piece of the definition of green jobs.

The other thing that we could think of as green jobs, and which many public intellectuals and scholars do think of as green jobs, are jobs in the caring economy and jobs in the creative economy. These are zero-carbon jobs and they are jobs that have great growth potential and that are imperative to growing our economy.

According to Citizens for Public Justice, green jobs provide goods or services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources. Jobs such as teaching or early childhood education, social work, and nursing have a low carbon footprint compared to jobs in oil and gas, transportation, heavy industry, and agriculture.

Jobs in the care and education sectors also play an important role in serving the most marginalized populations, who are the most vulnerable, we know, to the impacts of climate change. These are jobs that directly address the social determinants of health, which are critical to consider as a part of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

For example, Mr. Speaker, low-income people are most impacted by rising energy costs. Agricultural workers and communities are vulnerable to changing weather patterns, we hear about that on the floor of this House. Seniors and inadequately housed people are most impacted by heat waves. A just transition means ensuring that life is accessible and affordable, and that people have the services they need.

It looks like investments in low-carbon community transportation, affordable and efficient housing, quality long-term care, and support for workers through EI and retraining, which we've just heard about, but it also looks like addressing systemic racism, including environmental racism, and ensuring that Indigenous, Black, and newcomer communities have a voice in shaping the transition and policies that impact them.

Care and educational workers also play a critical role in educating, supporting, and advocating for people through periods of significant change. Women are overrepresented in the care economy. Typical characterizations of green jobs - which we just discussed, which in the new economy would look toward entrepreneurship and technological advancement, and in the discussion around transition mostly focuses on trades and heavy

industry - are very gendered. I think it's important to acknowledge that, because a just transition must also include the undervaluing of care work, including unpaid domestic and community labour.

These green caring jobs tend to be underfunded by the government, whereas the heaviest polluting jobs receive generous subsidies. A just transition means inverting this pattern.

This is not just our definition of green jobs. People like Naomi Klein have moved the discourse toward a broader understanding of the jobs that will help us tackle the climate emergency. Economists like Armine Yalnizyan have also talked about the "she-cession" and the caring economy as a way to tackle that and move towards a greener future.

A 2014 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which focused on the health impacts of climate change, stated the following:

"The most effective vulnerability reduction measures for health in the near term are programmes that implement and improve basic public health measures such as provision of clean water and sanitation, secure essential health care including vaccination and child health services, increased capacity for disaster preparedness and response and alleviate poverty . . ."

In a November 2<sup>nd</sup> open letter - that's today - from the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers to Environment and Climate Change Minister Tim Halman, Executive Director Alec Stratford explained that climate change affects people differently depending on their position in society and calls for an approach that emphasizes climate justice and reducing inequality. He stresses that the green economy is the caring economy.

Mr. Speaker, the Green New Deal touted in the United States included a program for the arts, which not only created jobs and sustained many artists through the Great Depression but also helped inspire a generation of people. Artists can explain the why of a policy in a way that governments and legislation can't. Art can help people embrace change and support people through transitions, including as an element of mental health care. Art is also an important avenue for holding decision-makers accountable and articulating people's lived experiences.

Consider how the CERB helped many creative workers stay afloat through the pandemic and how art created during that pandemic has helped people manage the anxiety and upheaval of the times we are in. As we consider the paradigm shift needed to move our economy away from fossil fuel dependence, arts and culture will be a critical piece of this transition. Given that the climate emergency is already upon us, arts will also play an important role in health and wellness especially among those more vulnerable to its effects. Art is a way for communities to tell their stories and share knowledge. In Nova Scotia, a

green jobs plan could look like investment in Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian artists and in Mi'kmaw-, Gaelic-, and French-language initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, a just transition also requires worker equity. A green jobs plan in Nova Scotia must of course include jobs in the energy sector and in trades, where women and racialized people are underrepresented. It's important that Nova Scotia ensure equity and access to these jobs, and this includes targeted training programs for people who face systemic barriers. There is already considerable work happening in this area: Women Unlimited, Techsploration, and supportive programs within the Nova Scotia Community College, as we heard of from my colleague.

[5:45 p.m.]

It's important that we aren't shutting people out of opportunities. For example, the new tax benefit for tradespeople under 30 in Nova Scotia could pose a barrier for people who start careers later due to family responsibilities, and those people are predominantly women.

We need to ensure that the jobs created through a green jobs plan are well-paying, unionized jobs and address inequity across all sectors. Non-profit jobs are also green jobs, and chronic underfunding of the community sector must be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage this government to really take the time to understand what green jobs mean. When my colleague stood up and spoke to the creative economy as a green jobs plan, she was ridiculed by a member of this government for not understanding the definition of green jobs. I want to be clear that green jobs include the caring economy, and the caring economy is predominantly made up of women.

Any definition of green jobs that includes only the tech and industrial sectors - whether, again, we're thinking of new jobs or we're thinking of a just transition - must also include many of the jobs in our economy that are traditionally underfunded, underpaid, undervalued, and staffed predominantly by women, but which really make up the backbone of our economy and will continue to do so into the future.

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

HON. BRIAN WONG: This is also an important topic for me. This is something that, in my mandate as Minister of Advanced Education, it is to try to repurpose and try to find jobs for people to transition in and out of. Also, for my colleague in Labour, Skills and Immigration. One of the benefits of having our mandates that are horizontal, we're able to include a lot of people in the conversation.

I do realize that you have some expertise. The member for Northside-Westmount spent many years working in that. I look forward to consulting and maybe getting some ideas and stuff back and forth. I look forward to that.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I found an article online that I'd like to read, published October 20<sup>th</sup> of this year on *The Conversation*. It's called, "Ending coal use blighted Scottish communities – a just transition to a green economy must support workers." I'm just going to read the first paragraph:

"While walking on Glasgow Green in 1765, James Watt had a eureka moment that led to the development of a more efficient steam engine, making coal-powered industry and transport possible. In November, a city with a claim to the dubious mantle of having invented the modern carbon economy will host the most pressing UN climate change conference yet - COP26."

I just find that this bill - we're looking at Scotland, we're looking at Cape Breton. I think there are some parallels and stuff that we can draw, but as we speak today to this important topic of the environment, I want to acknowledge the important work already done this session about the environment.

I'm very proud of the new environmental legislation, Mr. Speaker, brought forward by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change which is an ambitious plan to guide Nova Scotia toward a cleaner . . . (Interruption).

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I would ask the member to refrain from speaking about a bill that's on the floor.

The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

HON. BRIAN WONG: Thank you. I retract that. Thank you very much. So still working on ambitious stuff.

Before I speak to the future and current opportunities in green jobs, I want to take a moment to speak to the coal miners who for many generations worked in dangerous conditions to provide power to our province. While there are many communities across the province where coal mining is an important part of their history, I know the member for Sydney-Membertou certainly had the coal miners of Cape Breton in his heart as he put forward this topic for late debate.

Coal miners have faced dangerous working conditions, as well as consecutive efforts by governments to phase out the coal industry in efforts to meet emission targets. I want to acknowledge and pay homage in this House to coal miners whose careers have never been easy.

I want this House to join me in a moment of silence to pay our respects to the many lives lost in Nova Scotia coal mines as this once important industry begins its final descent underground in 2030. If we could please take a moment?

THE SPEAKER: We'll observe a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence is observed.]

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

HON. BRIAN WONG: As this province phases out coal power, more jobs in the green economy will be created. When I last spoke to this topic, I mentioned a number of NSCC programs that already exist to train Nova Scotians to work in coastal management and production; sustainable energy; and protecting freshwater resources. These programs exist because there is demand.

That's the benefit of our Nova Scotia Community College that is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a unified college. The NSCC offers programs that are market-driven, that prepare students to work jobs in demand. As our province's energy grid transitions to greener energy, the market will pull for these green jobs, and when it does, Nova Scotians can expect to see our community college and other post-secondary institutions to offer more programs to prepare students to work in the jobs that will be in demand.

Many in the private sector are also doing tremendous work in research and development for sustainability and environmental solutions. Private sector leadership is essential to this transition as market pull research leads to important investments in technologies that will lead the future of the green economy.

Touring our post-secondary institutions has been a priority of mine as minister. It's something that I look forward to continuing once the House rises. During my visits, I will continue to discuss the ongoing and future work to prepare the workforce for the green economy.

I'll end my remarks by speaking to my optimism for the opportunities for jobs in the green economy. Our government has demonstrated our commitment to the transition to the green economy. We recognize the skills training that will be needed not only for new students entering the workforce, but those transitioning into the green economy.

I'm optimistic for the opportunities that exist because of how well our NSCCs can act to meet the demands of the labour market. NSCCs are designed to be nimble, to react to what the market is doing. One of our conversations that are ongoing with our post-secondary and within apprenticeship in trades is the idea of micro-credentialing.

Micro-credentialing is really taking the skills and experience that existing workers already have and trying to transfer those into credentials for other jobs that can save people that are looking to transition lots of time and lots of money during that transition. I look forward to the work that's already currently ongoing with that.

I'm optimistic because partners in the private sector, from the post-secondary sector, and in this government are in agreement for the need to transition our province into the green economy and to ensure that we have a thriving economy where people can prosper, while ensuring that we protect our planet for the generations to come.

Cape Breton is really in a unique spot in the province where there is a multitude of fishing our coastal waters, where there is lots of potential there, as well as in our forests. I know the NSCCs are doing some great things. I do know when I had the visit to the Strait Campus, where they're training a lot of people in the marine industry - they have simulators that are there to train people in that industry.

If I go all the way down to Shelburne, they have a fishing simulator to train fishers on being aboard a boat. It's very dangerous, very costly, and very inefficient to have people training while they're actually at sea. Fishing is also part of that green economy that we can bring forward.

Our agriculture is all part of that green economy. In the Middleton campus at NSCC, we have researchers working on using seaweeds to integrate with their fertilizers so that the leeching that comes from our fertilizers stays in the ground where they are instead of leeching into our rivers and leeching into our lakes.

There's lots of stuff that's going on. One of the goals is that before anybody ever walks out of a post secondary institution or if they're going onto further education, they're attached. If somebody graduates with a B.Sc. in environmental studies, they have an attachment. They have somewhere to go, they already know.

We have a lot of work to do but I do believe that that private sector is going to be that pull that we are going to need to go forward. I believe we have the research and the innovation going on. I have met with Research Nova Scotia. I have met with ACOA. I've met with the universities and the NSCCs and the researchers and stuff within there.

I truly believe that we have Nova Scotia solutions. I don't think we have to look anywhere else. I think with Springboard Atlantic, which brings together our universities, the private sector, and all of our researchers in Nova Scotia, we will find the solution. Trust in me that I will work with you in Cape Breton to find transitions for those jobs.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.



FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to get up to speak about this current debate in front of us with regard to coal ending in 2030.

When we look at Cape Breton, and I was happy to hear the member talk about our history in coal mining and our coal miners and the sacrifices that they've made. As a matter of fact, there are many former coal miners in Cape Breton today who are suffering injuries in the mines, and they could really use some help from this government. We can talk about that later.

What this is about is really about a path forward. It's a path forward for these workers and for the community, a path forward but without having, with a path forward we need to look back.

This is about the workers and the communities. Nothing can be done to the workers or the communities without the workers or the communities. We need to involve these workers. We need to involve the communities in transitioning away from coal in Cape Breton. We need to work with our wonderful colleagues at NSCC. Cape Breton University as well has amazing programs.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The time for debate on the Adjournment Debate has expired.

I wish to thank everyone who participated in the Adjournment Debate this evening.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: Carried. We'll just give time for the committee to set up for Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[5:56 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Lisa Lachance in the Chair.]

[10:10 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Lisa Lachance, resumed the Chair.]

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

THE CLERK: That the committee has met and considered the following bills:

**Bill No. 43 - Motor Vehicle Act.**

**Bill No. 48 - Town of Lunenburg School Annex Lands Act.**

**Bill No. 50 - Ardnamurchan Club Act.**

**Bill No. 61 - Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act.**

**Bill No. 62 - Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act.**

**Bill No. 63 - Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act.**

**Bill No. 64 - Cannabis Control Act.**

and the chair has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House without amendment.

Further, Mx. Speaker, the committee has met and considered the following bill:

**Bill No. 57 - Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act.**

and the chair has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House with certain amendments.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mx. Speaker, before we end Government Business today, I would like to bring to the attention of the members that we do have a birthday girl in the House today. Minister Corkum-Greek is celebrating her birthday here. I can't think of a better way to spend your birthday than here tonight with all of these lovely people. Oh, and happy birthday to Patricia as well! (Applause)

That concludes Government Business for the day. I know everyone's disappointed. We really could probably pull out another Address in Reply if you'd like.

I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. Government Business will include Public Bills for Third Reading, No. 61, 62, 63, 64, Bills No. 43, 57, 48, and 50; Committee of the Whole House on Bills No. 68 and 71; and Address in Reply.

THE CHAIR: The motion is to adjourn.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 10:12 p.m.]

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**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 58**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Arielle Simpson and Madison Cleveland welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Arielle Simpson and Madison Cleveland on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 59**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Courtney Nickerson and Nick Adams welcomed their son into the world;

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 60**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Diane and Paulin d'Entremont welcomed their daughter into the world;

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 61**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Gillian Stoddard and Jordan Nash welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gillian Stoddard and Jordan Nash on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 62**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Ginette and Renaud d'Entremont welcomed their daughter into the world;

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

### **RESOLUTION NO. 63**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Julia Hancock and George Muise welcomed their daughter into the world;

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

### **RESOLUTION NO. 64**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Mataya Cromwell and Josh Darby welcomed their daughter into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mataya Cromwell and Josh Darby on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them a lifetime of happiness as parents.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 65**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Meagan Porter and Jacob Willis welcomed their son into the world;

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

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 66**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Renette and Tristen Goodwin welcomed their son into the world;

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 67**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

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

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

Whereas on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Shawna Doucette and Nicolas d'Entremont welcomed their daughter into the world;

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 68**

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 Nick Hunsley, owner of Hunsley and Associates Landscaping learned the value of hard work from his mom, a disabled single parent who raised Nick with a strong work ethic and supported him as started a successful business; and

Whereas Nick began his career as a youth cutting grass and helping neighbours in the community and was able to create a successful year-round business by providing creative, high-quality landscaping and snow removal services; and

Whereas Hunsley and Associates staff are always challenging themselves to try something new and provide unique personalized landscaping designs that complement the natural beauty of the property.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me congratulating Nick on his success as a local entrepreneur providing landscape design and maintenance, natural stonework, mulching services, as well as property maintenance and lawn care.



**RESOLUTION NO. 69**

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 Amanda Taylor, a long-time resident of Timberlea and an outstanding member of the Timberlea-Prospect election campaign of 2021 shared her enthusiasm and professionalism to engage our community in the electoral process; and

Whereas Amanda devoted endless hours to making phone calls, collecting and entering data, and walking thousands of steps a day knocking on doors through the hot, humid days of summer as well as the cool, damp, rainy days; and

Whereas Amanda was a natural team leader and brought a positive and energetic vibe to the campaign team, helping to create a team spirit among all the members of the group that resulted in an amazing and efficient campaign, while at the same time generating close friendships among all the campaign volunteers;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in my heart-felt gratitude to Amanda for her time, talent, and energy on the campaign trail and thank her for her delightful interactions with people that made her a valued and appreciated member of the team.

**RESOLUTION NO. 70**

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 Deborah and Rick Ratcliffe are retiring from the Western Halifax Community Learning Network (WHCLN), a community-based non-profit organization that provides quality adult learning programs and serves the Prospect and Lakeside communities; and

Whereas the organization offers free programs in basic literacy to achieve the GED or High School Diploma for Adults; and

Whereas Deborah worked as an experienced teacher and coordinator, and Rick upon his retirement from government became a full-time instructor as well for the adult literacy program after noticing the extensive need of people requiring assistance to read and fill in forms;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Debbie and Rick for their work in our community and for being a part of the personal growth and development that changes someone's life and instills self confidence for a better job, continued learning, and the ability to manage day-to-day life a little easier.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 71**

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 Derek Strong, a resident, active community volunteer, and local business owner in Hubley and his son Brett donated the materials, their time, and labour to build and install a bench; and

Whereas the bench was in memory of Paula Gallant, a long-time resident and elementary school teacher in Timberlea, whose life was tragically taken away 15 years ago to domestic violence; and

Whereas the purple bench sits along a peaceful stretch of Mill Lake on the St. Margarets Bay Rails to Trails and is a special reminder of Paula's beautiful personality, serves to raise awareness about violence against women, and is a symbol of courage, survival, and honour, to symbolize the fight to end violence against women;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me thanking Derek for his ongoing care and commitment to our community and for leading his son Brett in his footsteps to value the importance and rewards of being a compassionate, caring, and supportive member of our community.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 72**

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 the First Five Island Lake Venture Company, a local youth scouting group, participated in a conservation project to help protect the duck population by teaming up with another scouting group and developing a business plan to purchase wood and supplies to build six duck houses to attract Wood Ducks in our local lakes; and

Whereas considered one of the most beautiful waterfowl in Nova Scotia, the Wood Duck was nearly hunted to extinction and through the work of conservation, the Wood Duck population has grown to over a million Wood Ducks across North America; and

Whereas the Wood Duck has a beautiful crest and is multicoloured, the males are patterned in iridescent greens, purples, and blues with a distinctive white chin patch, face stripes and a mainly red bill, and the females are gray in colour with a broad white eye-ring;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me thanking the scouts from the First Five Island Adventure group for their conservation efforts to help the local duck population.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 73**

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 Lorne Ostrov, a resident of Timberlea and a dependable staff member at the Costco Warehouse in Bayers Lake, providing years of outstanding customer service and sharing detailed information and recommendations about the products he sells; and

Whereas Lorne has been working for the past 12 years helping to ensure customers receive the perfect fit of eyeglasses to complement their face shape and lifestyle and is highly respected by his co-workers, known for his competence at the eyeglass counter, and renown for his high quality of customer care; and

Whereas one of Lorne's remarkable characteristics is the way he goes about helping others beyond what his work requires, quietly and without calling attention to himself;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Lorne for the service he provides daily to his customers, his employer, and our community.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 74**

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 throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the pharmacy team at the Timberlea Guardian Pharmacy has been playing a very important role answering questions about the Coronavirus and keeping Nova Scotians safe and healthy during this unprecedented time; and

Whereas the Timberlea Guardian began offering COVID-19 vaccines in May of 2021 and will continue to offer COVID-19 vaccinations with the expansion of third vaccines to include children under 12 well into the Spring of the coming year; and

Whereas Trish Staples, the pharmacy manager at the Timberlea Guardian Pharmacy, has led a team of 10 pharmacists and twice that number in screeners and room attendants to complete just under 6,000 COVID shots to our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Trish Staples and her team at the Timberlea Guardian Pharmacy for their dedication to enhance the role in the delivery of health care services.