



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

First Session

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:	
Old Military Housing Pitched to Developers, Susan Leblanc	1187
Reflection and Action Task Group: Final Report to the Legislature, Hon. Tim Houston (The Premier).....	1188
WCB Report on Progress in Time Lost to Workplace Injury, Hon. Jill Balsler.....	1188
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:	
Inquiry into N.S. Home for Colored Children: Addressing Racism and Injustice - Recog., Hon. Tim Houston (The Premier).....	1189
Hon. Iain Rankin	1190
Gary Burrill	1192
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 75, N.S. Guides Assoc.: Launch of Indig. Learning Day - Thanks, Hon. Steve Craig	1192
Vote - Affirmative.....	1193
Res. 76, Mun. Awareness Wk.: Role of Municip. Gov't. - Recog.,	

Hon. John Lohr	1193
Vote - Affirmative.....	1194
Res. 77, Stutz, Hanspeter: Recip. of Gary MacDonald Cul. Ambass. Awd. - Congrats., Hon. Greg Morrow	1194
Vote - Affirmative.....	1195
Res. 78, Labradore, Robert/Nicholas, Kamden: Preserv. Mi'kmaw Culture - Congrats., Hon. Karla MacFarlane	1195
Vote - Affirmative.....	1196
Res. 79, Van Dyk's By Nature: Recip. of A Taste of N.S. Awd. - Congrats., Hon. Greg Morrow.....	1196
Vote - Affirmative.....	1196
Res. 80, MacLeod, Angus: Published Gaelic Novel <i>Ás a' Chamhanaich</i> -, Congrats., Hon. Allan MacMaster	1196
Vote - Affirmative.....	1197
Res. 81, Renaud, Claude: Contribs. to N.S. Acad. and Franc. Coms. - Recog., Hon. Colton LeBlanc	1197
Vote - Affirmative.....	1199
Res. 82, Toney, Debra: Recip. of N.S. Counc. of Fed. Lit. Awd. - Congrats., Hon. Jill Balsler	1199
Vote - Affirmative.....	1199
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
No. 84, An Act to Amend Chapter 469 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Time Definition Act, Hon. Iain Rankin.....	1200
No. 85, An Act to Amend Chapter 441 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Statistics Act, Suzy Hansen.....	1200
No. 86, An Act Respecting Down Syndrome, Hon. Keith Irving.....	1200
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 83, Cumb. Reg. Health Care Ctr.: Cancer Care Centre Req'd - Recog., Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin.....	1200
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:	
Operation A Pittance of Time: Sharing Rem. Day Plans on Soc. Media - Recog., Hon. Becky Druhan	1201
Hindu and Extended Com.: Diwali Celeb. - Best Wishes, Hon. Ben Jessome.....	1202
The Bargain! Shop: Reopening in New Waterford - Welcome, Kendra Coombes.....	1202
National Day of Rem. for Road Crash Victims: Honouring Those Lost to Motor Veh. Fatalities - Recog., Hon. Brad Johns.....	1202
CPAWS: Blue Mtn.-Birch Cove Lakes Wild. Area Preserv. Efforts - Recog., Rafah DiCostanzo.....	1203
Indian Com.: Celeb. of Diwali - Best Wishes, Suzy Hansen.....	1203
Prem. & PW Min.: Removal of Cob. Pass Tolls - Thanks,	

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin	1204
Voluns. & Businesses: Refurbishing of Springhill Coal Cars - Thanks, Hon. Tory Rushton.....	1204
Comeau, Adrien: Work as Campaign Coordinator - Thanks, Ronnie LeBlanc	1205
International Inuit Day: Celeb. of Resilience of Inuit Coms. - Recog., Lisa Lachance	1206
New Ross 4-H Handy Hands Club: Empowering Youth to Reach Full Potential - Recog., Danielle Barkhouse.....	1206
Handley, Rebecca: Com. Serv. - Congrats., Fred Tilley.....	1207
Smaller Hearts Band: Nomin. for N.S. Music Week - Recog., Susan Leblanc	1207
E. Passage and Area Bus. Assoc.: Banner Pgm. Highlighting Local Veterans - Thanks, Hon. Barbara Adams.....	1208
Morrison, Gerry: Surviving Abuse and Success as Entrepreneur - Recog., Braedon Clark	1208
South Bar Fire Dept.: Handing Out Halloween Treats - Thanks, Kendra Coombes.....	1209
Samson, Rod/Fraser, Peter/Tracey, Barry: Recips. of EHS Long Service Awds. - Congrats., Trevor Boudreau.....	1209
Auntie Dorn's: Recip. of Valley's Best Awd. for Best Take-Out - Congrats., Carman Kerr.....	1210
Atelihai Inuit: Serving Inuit Pop. of Maritimes - Thanks, Lisa Lachance	1210
Flemming, Don: Death of - Tribute, Hon. Steve Craig.....	1211
Members for Dart. S. and Queens: Work in House: Recog., Hon. Derek Mombourquette	1211
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:	
No. 224, Prem. - Skill Trades: High Schools - Access, Hon. Iain Rankin.....	1212
No. 225, Prem.: Min. Wage - Fairness, Gary Burrill.....	1213
No. 226, Prem. - Atl. Loop: Reg. Min. - Update, Hon. Iain Rankin.....	1215
No. 227, Prem.: Fixed Election Date - Position, Braedon Clark	1216
No. 228, Agric. - N.S. Prov. Ex. Comm'n.: Meeting - Details, Hon. Keith Irving	1217
No. 229, LSI: Island Emp. - Forensic Audit, Kendra Coombes.....	1218
No. 230, DCS - Gov't.: Homelessness - Vision, Hon. Brendan Maguire.....	1219
No. 231, SLTC: Long-term Care Wait-list - Action, Hon. Kelly Regan.....	1220

No. 232, DHW: No Health Care Legislation - Explain, Hon. Zach Churchill.....	1221
No. 233, EECD: Pre-Primary Classes - Cap, Suzy Hansen.....	1223
No. 235, OEARI - Land Titles Initiative: Short-Staffed - Support, Angela Simmonds.....	1224
No. 236, ANSA: Working Group Status - Update, Hon. Tony Ince	1224
No. 237, DCS: Lack of Appropriate Housing - Comment, Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin.....	1225
No. 238, NRR: Burning of Biomass - Comment, Claudia Chender.....	1227
No. 239, LSI NSGEU Meeting Request - Comment, Hon. Derek Mombourquette.....	1228
No. 240, RTA: Utility Cost to Renters - Comment, Carman Kerr.....	1229
No. 241, DHW: Bayers Lake Centre Opening - Update, Rafah DiCostanzo	1230
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS:	
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CWH ON BILLS AT 2:56 P.M.	1231
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 3:05 P.M.	1231
CWH REPORTS.....	1231
PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING:	
No. 63, Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act	
Hon. John Lohr	1232
Lorelei Nicoll	1232
Kendra Coombes.....	1233
Hon. Keith Irving	1234
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin.....	1236
Hon. John Lohr	1238
Vote - Affirmative.....	1240
No. 62, Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act	
Hon. Colton LeBlanc	1240
Hon. Patricia Arab	1240
Suzy Hansen.....	1241
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin.....	1244
Gary Burrill.....	1246
Hon. Colton LeBlanc	1252
Vote - Affirmative.....	1254
No. 61, Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act	
Hon. Kim Masland.....	1254
Lorelei Nicoll	1255
Susan Leblanc	1255
Braedon Clark	1260
Hon. Kim Masland.....	1261
Vote - Affirmative.....	1262

No. 43, Motor Vehicle Act (amended)	
Hon. Kim Masland.....	1263
Braedon Clark	1263
Susan Leblanc	1263
Hon. Kim Masland.....	1265
Vote - Affirmative.....	1266
No. 64, Cannabis Control Act (amended)	
Hon. Brad Johns.....	1266
Angela Simmonds.....	1267
Claudia Chender.....	1267
Hon. Brad Johns.....	1268
Vote - Affirmative.....	1268
No. 48, Town of Lunenburg School Annex Lands Act,	
Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek.....	1268
Vote - Affirmative.....	1268
No. 50, Ardnamurchan Club Act (amended)	
Hon. Colton LeBlanc	1269
Vote - Affirmative.....	1269
No. 57, Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act	
Hon. Tim Halman	1269
Hon. Keith Irving	1269
Susan Leblanc	1271
Hon. Becky Druhan	1275
Claudia Chender.....	1278
Hon. Derek Mombourquette	1280
Hon. Karla MacFarlane.....	1282
Suzy Hansen.....	1284
Ronnie LeBlanc	1284
Chris Palmer.....	1285
Tom Taggart.....	1288
Hon. Brendan Maguire.....	1292
Hon. Iain Rankin.....	1294
Hon. Tim Halman	1297
Vote - Affirmative.....	1303
ADDRESS IN REPLY:	
Ali Duale.....	1304
Nolan Young.....	1308
Hon. Brendan Maguire.....	1311
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Fri., Nov. 5 th at 9:00 a.m.....	1325
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 84, Duale, Ali: Com. Ldrship. - Recog.,	
Hon. Iain Rankin.....	1326
Res. 85, BLT Running Club: Dedic. and Commit. To Reg. Activity -	
Recog., Hon. Iain Rankin.....	1326
Res. 86, McNeil, Camryn - Golden Living Sr. Lifestyle Supp.:	
Supp. for Seniors - Thanks, Hon. Iain Rankin.....	1327

Res. 87, Huntley, Mike - Huntley's Diving & Marine Servs.: Recip. of Valley's Best Awd. - Congrats., Hon. John Lohr	1327
Res. 88, Wolfe, Melanie & Chris: Son - Birth Congrats., Hon. Kim Masland.....	1328
Res. 89, LeBlanc-Joyce, Evelyn: Recip. of Denise Samson Cert. - Congrats., Ronnie LeBlanc	1328
Res. 90, Doucet-Boudreau, Glenda: Induction to Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones - Congrats., Ronnie LeBlanc.....	1329
Res. 91, Saulnier-Thimot: Induction to Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones - Congrats., Ronnie LeBlanc	1330
Res. 92, Comeau, Jocelyne: Recip. of Prix Hommage en dev. cult. - Congrats., Ronnie LeBlanc	1330



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 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. We'll begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to table an article that I referenced in Question Period, earlier in the session, for the benefit of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Premier.

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a report, The Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children Restorative Inquiry, the Reflection and Action Task Force's final report to the Legislature.

In tabling that report I'd like to introduce to the members of the House a couple of special guests in the gallery, Tony Smith and Gerry Morrison. They are representing VOICES, which is the group of survivors of the Home for Colored Children. I want to thank them for their work on behalf of Nova Scotians to push for positive change in this province.

Gentlemen, I'd say to you, your work has produced a lot of positive results in this province. We know there's more work to be done. We will continue to do that work, but we wouldn't be nearly as far as we are today without your efforts.

I've said this to them privately, but I'll tell members of the House and Nova Scotians - in my experience, of all the people I've met in life who have reason to be bitter or angry, Tony and Gerry and the rest of the survivors would be in that group. But I have never heard an ounce of bitterness from these gentlemen. It's nothing but positivity and moving forward. I thank you for that.

There are a couple of copies of the report circulating in the House. I'd like all members to sign it for them. They've requested that. So when it comes to you, please sign it for them.

I'll table that report. I have a statement to read as well, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if this is the right time - come to that later? Okay.

Thank you, guys. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

HON. JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a report entitled the *WCB Nova Scotia Q2 2021 Report to the Community*.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Moments ago, I tabled the Final Report to the Legislature from the Reflection and Action Task Group outlining how the government has continued the work of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children Restorative Inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, as all members of this House would know, the Restorative Inquiry is one of the most important pieces of work this province has ever undertaken. I want to credit the previous government for launching the inquiry. Specifically, I want to mention Premier McNeil, who was instrumental in making this happen as well. (Applause)

The inquiry was done with strong support and participation from all parties in this Legislature, and it's my honour to stand here today as Premier and speak to the final report that has now been tabled.

The Restorative Inquiry was a call to examine some of the most difficult and painful parts of our past. It was an opportunity to learn from them and do better.

The former residents of the home modelled how to do this work. They made it clear that the goal was not to name or punish individual bad actors but instead to look at our systems and institutions, to reflect on the impacts of systemic racism, and to find a different way forward together.

This report outlines how government has begun to do that work, and how government will continue to do that work in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be as clear as the Restorative Inquiry was clear - this is not just a matter of adding new programs or services. It's about changing how we think. It's about putting people and human needs at the centre of all we do.

Government is taking steps to address barriers. The learnings from the Restorative Inquiry have shaped many positive changes within government. The Department of Community Services has formed the Africentric Child Welfare Team to better serve the needs of children, youth, and families of African descent; an African Nova Scotian youth employment social innovation lab is bringing multiple departments together to help close the employment gap for Black youth; and the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives is leading a whole-of-government approach to address systemic racism and achieve more equitable outcomes in health, education, the economy, and in all walks of life here in Nova Scotia.

There is much work to do, and there is much for us to learn. I also want to acknowledge that I, as Premier, have more to learn. I understand my privilege. I'm committed to listening, to working with communities, and to doing everything in my power to address racism and injustice in this province.

I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in the House and my colleagues on the all-party committee that we're striking to discuss these issues very openly, so that we can bring forward equity and anti-racism legislation in this House in the Spring.

I want to recognize the members opposite for their passion, for their wisdom, and for the experience that they collectively bring to the Legislature on these important issues. We want to work together. We want to work with Nova Scotians to tackle racism head-on and to say in unison that racism has no place in this province.

Today I want to acknowledge that our government is committing to another action from the Restorative Inquiry. Over the coming months we'll work with community partners to design a Child and Youth Commission to protect and advance the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children and youth in Nova Scotia.

While some other jurisdictions have a child and youth advocate, this commission model will be unique to Nova Scotia. It will take a restorative approach and focus on working with children, with youth, with families, and with the entire care system.

We want to do this right. We will work with communities and our colleagues here in the House on behalf of this Legislature and on behalf of all Nova Scotians.

I say to the former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children that we can never honour you enough. We thank you. When you were young and experiencing awful things that no child should ever have to experience, I know that you felt your voices were unheard and that no one was listening. I want to assure you today that your voices matter.

Your courage has changed the course of this government and of this province. We want to make sure that no child in Nova Scotia ever feels unheard again. We are on a journey. We're on that journey together. I thank you for leading the way for us. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for a copy of his remarks in advance today.

The hardest and most difficult journeys all start the same way: with one step. We began this journey with Black Canadians and African Nova Scotians in this province in 2014. The first step was an acknowledgement of the abuse that no child should ever experience.

An apology from former Premier Stephen McNeil, whom I remember very fondly for this step that he took. It's one of those moments in history where many of us probably

remember exactly where they were. I was driving and I pulled over when the apology started to be broadcast over the radio. I just decided to just sit there and take it all in and listen.

Together with the community, we took the next step and launched the inquiry into the systemic racism and abuse that took place at the Home for Colored Children. Over the years we listened to the stories from survivors; stories that were far too often silenced or forgotten.

Through this process, we better understood our role as government in upholding systems that sought to oppress and hold back Black Canadians and African Nova Scotians in this province for 400 years. The work completed in the Restorative Inquiry began charting a new path forward.

The Premier mentioned some of those initiatives with the Afrocentric Child Welfare Team and the African Nova Scotian Youth Employment Social Innovation Lab. The nucleus of this important work is centered in the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives.

[1:15 p.m.]

In my short time as Premier, this is probably the most impactful thing that I was able to do. It was a result of diversity, I have to say, at my transition table, that this idea was brought forward, an example of why diversity is so important at decision making tables.

What came out of that is the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute, working with communities and giving them the infrastructure to tackle systemic racism in our justice system.

This past June marked the 100th anniversary of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, which I had the opportunity to participate in virtually. In all of the 263 years of this Legislature, we've only had eight members from the Black community represented in this House, and half of them we have here today. Just look at how the quality of the debate and the inclusiveness of the debate and the issues that are risen in this House have improved, just over the last number of months. (Applause)

That's why we brought forward legislation to define racism in all its forms, and I appreciate the government working on that with us and the meeting we had earlier today to take the next step in this journey toward dismantling racism in Nova Scotia. Other legislation has been brought forward on environmental racism, and just last night we saw some amendments that were accepted, that get to the spirit of what we're trying to achieve.

I want to thank the commissioners who led this important work on behalf of their communities in our province. I want to thank the survivors and community leadership for being part of the journey. Tony and Gerry, your strength, your resilience, and your desire for healing and reconciliation are an inspiration to all of us in this House and all Nova Scotians. (Standing Ovation.)

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

GARY BURRILL: I wish to add to the gratitude that has been so sincerely expressed by the two preceding speakers. Also, the gratitude of the New Democratic Party to the former residents of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children and their impacted families and communities, and all others who have worked to bring to light these stories and have committed to guiding our province. As a province, we move forward.

The roots of what happened at the Nova Scotia Home are the same roots that lie at the base of the systemic anti-Black racism that continues to shape the lives of people in Nova Scotia today. We understand that these roots are very deep in the province of Nova Scotia. We recognize anti-Black racism as a baked-in dimension of our structures, organizations, systems, and services, and we also recognize the profound uniqueness of the African Nova Scotian experience. We stand in reflection and acknowledgement of these realities as we recommit our own selves, all here this afternoon, to the profoundly open-ended work that lies ahead.

The daily work to end - really end - systemic racism and discrimination and inequality in all their forms is far-reaching. It lies in the justice system, it lies in the policing regime, it lies in the school system. It certainly lies in the child welfare system, it lies in our housing situation. It profoundly affects the whole question related to incomes and the struggle to eliminate poverty. I would like to acknowledge on behalf of our caucus the progress that has been made so far, and the communities and the people and the organizations that have been at the forefront of pushing forward, toward and for this progress.

Transformative challenges lie ahead, and our caucus stands as willing partners and allies in this work. (Standing Ovation)

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 75

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

Whereas the Nova Scotia sport fishing sector is growing because of ongoing initiatives of the Fish Nova Scotia brand; and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Guides Service, together with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, recognizes the importance of professional development for fishing guides to enhance services and experiences for clients, and to promote the sport fishing industry; and

Whereas during Mi'kmaq History Month, the Nova Scotia Guides Service launched a pilot workshop called Indigenous Learning Day for Fishing Guides and Anglers to advance understanding and awareness of Mi'kmaw culture and traditions, to promote Treaty education, and to learn about concepts of Mi'kmaq connections to the land and the natural world;

Therefore be it resolved that this House recognize and thank the Nova Scotia Guides Service, staff at the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Office of L'Nu Affairs, along with Elders and knowledge holders from the Mi'kmaw community who contributed to this successful and important day of learning.

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 SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 76

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas municipal and village governments across the province provide essential services that enhance the quality of life of Nova Scotians and make our communities a destination of choice for immigrants around the world; and

Whereas dedicated mayors, wardens, councillors, commissioners, and staff are critical to the effective governance of our municipalities and villages; and

Whereas municipalities and villages have been exemplary partners in our fight against COVID-19 through their ongoing efforts to keep Nova Scotians healthy, safe, and informed;

Therefore be it resolved that as November 22nd to 28th is Municipal Awareness Week, all members of this House of Assembly recognize the vital role of municipal governments and all who support them.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 77

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

Whereas the Taste of Nova Scotia Awards celebrate the people and products in the heart of Nova Scotia's culinary industry; and

Whereas the Gary MacDonald Culinary Ambassador Award was presented to Hanspeter Stutz of Grand Pré Wines, Fundy Drinks, and the Magic Winery Bus; and

Whereas Hanspeter Stutz embodies the qualities of this award, which recognizes an individual, group, or organization who exemplifies Nova Scotia as an international culinary destination;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Hanspeter Stutz for receiving this Taste of Nova Scotia Award and as a culinary ambassador for our province.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 78

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

Whereas young archaeologist Robert Labradore from Glooscap First Nation and Kamden Nicholas from Pictou Landing First Nation are delivering presentations across the province to inspire more Mi'kmaw students to consider a career in archaeology; and

Whereas this summer they both worked at Pasi'tuek, an important Mi'kmaw cultural site, discovering artifacts left behind by their ancestors; and

Whereas not only does Robert and Kamden's presentation share what archaeology is, why it's important to Mi'kmaw culture, and the history of the Mi'kmaw land, but it conveys their passion for conserving their culture and heritage;

Therefore be it resolved that all of the members of this Legislature congratulate Robert Labradore and Kamden Nicholas on their excellent work in preserving their culture, and helping the next generation understand how profoundly important this region was and still is to the Mi'kmaw people.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 79

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

Whereas A Taste of Nova Scotia Awards celebrate the people and products at the heart of Nova Scotia's culinary industry; and

Whereas for more than 60 years, the Van Dyk family has run a farm with a simple mission: to grow the finest wild blueberries in the world right here in Nova Scotia and to share them with the world; and

Whereas A Taste of Nova Scotia named Van Dyk's By Nature the 2021 Producer of the Year for its dedication to producing high quality products to local domestic and export markets;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House congratulate Queens County's Van Dyk's By Nature for this award and for its ongoing commitment to quality in Nova Scotia's wild blueberry industry.

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. 80

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

Whereas Angus MacLeod has written and illustrated Canada's first Scottish-Gaelic graphic novel called *Ás a' Chamhanaich* or *Out of the Twilight*; and

Whereas the 12 short stories from Mr. MacLeod's debut novel have their roots in older Gaelic stories and creatures from Gaelic mythology; and

Whereas although Mr. MacLeod's parents were native Gaelic speakers, Mr. MacLeod did not learn the language until he was 37 years old and is now a Gaelic language and song teacher;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature congratulate Angus MacLeod for publishing *Ás a' Chamhanaich* and thank him for his efforts in preserving and promoting Gaelic in our province.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 81

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Monsieur le président, à une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que M. Claude Renaud est investi dans le développement de la communauté francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse depuis plus de 30 ans; et

Attendu qu'il a occupé les postes, entre autres, de présidence du premier conseil scolaire francophone en Nouvelle-Écosse, du Conseil d'école et de la Société culturelle du Grand-Havre ou encore du Conseil communautaire du Grand-Havre, et il est également un membre et un fondateur du Conseil culturelle de la Nouvelle-Écosse qui est l'ancêtre de la présent Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; et

Attendu que M. Claude Renaud a été reçu, lors de la dernière assemblée générale de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le certificat Léger-Comeau, la plus haute distinction de la communauté acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les députés de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour reconnaître et féliciter M. Claude Renaud pour son travail dans les domaines de l'éducation, du développement communautaire et la contribution exceptionnelle à la promotion et au rayonnement culturel de la communauté acadienne et francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

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

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

Whereas Mr. Claude Renaud has been involved in the development of Nova Scotia's francophone community for more than 30 years; and

Whereas he has held the positions, among others, of president of the first francophone school board in Nova Scotia, the School Council and Cultural Society of Grand-Havre, and the Community Council of Grand-Havre. He is also a founding member of the Conseil culturel de la Nouvelle-Écosse, which is the predecessor of the present Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; and

Whereas Mr. Claude Renaud received at the last annual general meeting of the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse the Léger Comeau Certificate, the highest distinction of the Acadian community of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing and congratulating Mr. Claude Renaud for his work in the fields of education, community development, and his exceptional contributions to the promotion and cultural influence of the Acadian and francophone communities in Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

[1:30 p.m.]

RESOLUTION NO. 82

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

Whereas Debra Toney from the Annapolis Valley First Nation is a dedicated role model for learners in her community and an advocate for Indigenous rights, who continues to work towards improving her literacy and overcoming personal challenges; and

Whereas Canadian premiers and territorial leaders have recognized the importance of learning by presenting an annual award to each province and territory to an adult learner who demonstrates outstanding achievements in literacy and makes a significant contribution to their school, workplace or community; and

Whereas the government of Nova Scotia is committed to empowering Nova Scotians through literacy and creating opportunities for lifelong learning, through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning's tuition-free programming;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Debra Toney, this year's recipient of the Nova Scotia Council of Federation Literacy Award, as Debra's strength, resilience, and dedication to improving her literacy, along with her contributions to her community as an advocate for Indigenous rights and treaty education, deserves to be recognized.

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.

INTRODCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 84 - An Act to Amend Chapter 469 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Time Definition Act. (Hon. Iain Rankin)

Bill No. 85 - An Act to Amend Chapter 441 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Statistics Act. (Suzy Hansen)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HON. KEITH IRVING: Thank you. First of all, I'd like to thank Allison Brewer and her son Will for joining me today to introduce this bill. In a press briefing this afternoon. I'd also like to thank Sarah and Ian Thompson and their son Harvey, who inspired this bill.

Bill No. 86 - An Act Respecting Down Syndrome. (Hon. Keith Irving)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 83

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

Whereas the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre is the only regional hospital in Nova Scotia that does not currently administer chemotherapy, forcing all cancer patients to travel long distances for treatment; and

Whereas the impacts of the pandemic had added challenges for cancer patients in Cumberland for the simple reason that doctors were previously able to refer people to clinics in New Brunswick to limit their travel time and the border closures made that impossible, a clear sign health care is no longer portable for all Canadians; and

Whereas it has been long accepted that early detection can vastly improve outcomes and the residents of Cumberland deserve to have their hospital equipped with services that are required to treat serious illnesses and conditions without barriers;

Therefore be it resolved that this government commit to the creation of a cancer care centre that will include early detection clinics, virtual oncology specialist appointments, and chemotherapy treatment within the Cumberland Regional Health Care

Centre and assure residents that their regional hospital will be comparable to the rest of Nova Scotia in providing reliable care when they are in need.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Nos.

The notice is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

OPERATION A PITTANCE OF TIME: SHARING REM. DAY PLANS ON SOC. MEDIA - RECOG.

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Mr. Speaker, Remembrance Day is a time when we stop, remember, reflect, and honour the individuals who have served and continue to serve our country, and we help young and new Canadians understand what service and sacrifice mean. Central to this is the moment of remembrance - two minutes of silence on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

In our busy times, when many have the great fortune not to know first-hand the experience of war, it is too easy to let those moments slip by without recognition. Terry Kelly observed this in 1999, during an incident in a drug store when a man chose not to join other customers in their silence. Terry committed at that moment to creating a greater awareness of the sacrifices of veterans and inspired and wrote the song “A Pittance of Time.”

This year, Terry, Honorary Colonel Dan Hennessey, and the Canadian Walk for Veterans are launching Operation A Pittance of Time as an opportunity for Canadians to share their plans for remembrance on social media using the hashtags #apittanceoftime, #remembranceday, and #canadaremembers.

Mr. Speaker, I invite and encourage members and Nova Scotians to join Operation A Pittance of Time and share their plans to honour our veterans. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Before we move on, there's quite a bit of chatter in the House. I would ask that if you want to have a discussion, please take it outside.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

HINDU AND EXTENDED COM.: DIWALI CELEB. - BEST WISHES

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, today, November 4th, marks Diwali - the celebration of light over darkness. I want to wish folks in our Hindu community, as well as the extended community, a happy Diwali today.

Now more than ever we need to see darkness suppressed by the light, so happy Diwali everybody. (Applause)

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

**THE BARGAIN! SHOP:
REOPENING IN NEW WATERFORD - WELCOME**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize that The Bargain! Shop is back in New Waterford. In the Spring of 2020, the employees and the community were heartbroken to learn The Bargain! Shop would close.

Mr. Speaker, 10 employees lost their jobs and customers who depended on the store as a one-stop shop for everything from groceries to clothes and household goods were left at a loss as many did not drive. That is why the community was happy to learn the New Waterford Bargain Shop would reopen in a new location, but still on Plummer Avenue. Eighty to 100 people have already applied for jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in welcoming The Bargain! Shop back to New Waterford.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke

**NATIONAL DAY OF REM. FOR ROAD CRASH VICTIMS:
HONOURING THOSE LOST TO MOTOR VEH. FATALITIES - RECOG.**

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge that November 21st is the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims. Nova Scotia has an average of 80 deaths and around 630 hospitalizations each year as a result of motor vehicle accidents, with our youth age 15-24 having the highest rate of fatality collisions.

On June 22nd this year, my youngest brother's childhood friend, Mark MacDonald, was one of these fatalities. Mark was only 45 years old and is survived by his partner Shanna and their four beautiful children.

I've personally known Mark for over 35 years. He was my brother Michael's longest friend and the best man at his wedding. Anyone who knew Mark knew that he was one of those people would give you the shirt off his back, a dedicated family man devoted to his loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to not only further honour Mark's life, but to acknowledge all those Nova Scotians who have been lost in motor vehicle accidents so far this year, and to extend sincere sympathies to their families and friends.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**CPAWS: BLUE MTN.-BIRCH COVE LAKES WILD. AREA
PRESERV. EFFORTS - RECOG.**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize CPAWS, the local Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, for their continued effort to protect and promote Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area. Only 5 kilometres from urban Halifax, you will find the most incredible back country experience.

In late October, CPAWS spent the week on a camping expedition to showcase all that Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes has to offer. Their week expedition included paddling, a unique experience as you can paddle around the entire nine-lake loop. Also, students from SMU and Kings joined in on a Williams Lahey Resident Hike, a truly unforgettable experience.

Recently, the federal government chose this area for potential national urban park designation. I look forward to continuing to work alongside this group to make it a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the House join me in recognizing CPAWS for their remarkable efforts to protect and make Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes an incredible destination.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

INDIAN COM.: CELEB. OF DIWALI - BEST WISHES

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer well wishes to the Indian community in Nova Scotia, but, as well, the Indian community in Halifax Needham, as they celebrate Diwali, a joyous occasion that reinforces the ethos of universal peace and brotherhood.

This is one of the biggest festivals in the community, seeing devotees worship the Goddess Lakshmi. November 4th this year, lasting over five days, the holiday is celebrated by millions of Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs worldwide. The name of this festival is derived

from āvali, which means row, and dīpa, meaning clay lamps. When merged, these words mean a row of lights. For this reason, lights are symbolic of this festival, and Indians go overboard with sparklers and fireworks to fuel the inner light that spiritually protects them from the darkness.

I would like to ask all the members of this House to help me offer best wishes for a happy Diwali to all those who are celebrating today.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

PREM. & PW MIN.: REMOVAL OF COB. PASS TOLLS - THANKS

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I want to stand for a moment today to thank the Premier, as well as the Minister for Public Works, for their commitment to remove the tolls off the Cobequid Pass. I thank them on behalf of the people of Cumberland North and surrounding areas.

For over 25 years, our people have fought for fairness. Those tolls represented not just an extra financial barrier and tax to our people, it represented more than that. It created a division. The people of our area have not felt connected and part of the Province of Nova Scotia. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they have felt more connected with the Province of New Brunswick. Since the beginning of the pandemic with border closures and challenges there, our people have felt isolated and harmed.

Today, I want to celebrate and thank the Premier and thank the Minister of Public Works for coming through on their promise for the people of Cumberland North. Thank you for removing the tolls. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

**VOLUNS. & BUSINESSES:
REFURBISHING OF SPRINGHILL COAL CARS - THANKS**

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge all of the volunteers and the businesses who were a part of the refurbishing of the Springhill coal cars. These cars were placed near the site of the old Number 2 and Number 4 Coal Mines in the Springhill Industrial Park.

The cars were a memorial that were originally placed after an anniversary of the Springhill Bump. Over the last 20 years they have sustained much damage due to weather, and many residents were saddened to see these iconic historical symbols start to lose their luster. Volunteers and businesses came together with a solution. The cars were this year rebuilt and a concrete slab was placed with an old brick from the old Lamp Cabin placed in the cement pad.

[1:45 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking these volunteers and businesses on restoring this very important symbol to the historic Town of Springhill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

COMEAU, ADRIEN: WORK AS CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR - THANKS

RONNIE LEBLANC: Monsieur le président, en tant que député de première année, je reconnait le rôle critique que les bénévoles de ma campagne ont joué pour me faire élire en chambre. Un membre de mon équipe, Adrien Comeau, a accepté d'être mon coordinateur de campagne, un poste habituellement occupé par un bénévole de campagne plus expérimenté. Toutefois, j'avais confiance en Adrien.

De plus, comme mon directeur de campagne était absent au moment du dépôt du mandat, Adrien a accepté d'agir comme directeur de campagne par intérim pendant une partie de la campagne.

Je souhaite profiter de cet occasion pour remercier Adrien pour les rôles qu'il a joué dans ma campagne et pour la nouvelle perspective qu'il a apporté à la table ainsi que pour son engagement continu dans nombreuses organisations dans notre communauté.

Mr. Speaker, as a freshman MLA I am aware of the critical role my campaign volunteers played to get me elected to this House. One member of my team, Adrien Comeau, agreed to be my campaign coordinator, a position usually filled by a more seasoned campaign volunteer. Nevertheless, I had confidence in Adrien, who came to my campaign with a long list of accomplishments and recognition.

Adrien Comeau coordinated the activities of the campaign, working with new volunteers and campaign veterans. Also, as my campaign manager was away when the writ was dropped during the Summer election, Adrien agreed to act as the campaign manager for part of the campaign.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Adrien for the roles he played in my campaign and the fresh perspective he brought to the table, as well as his continued engagement in so many organizations in our community. Merci.

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

**INTERNATIONAL INUIT DAY:
CELEB. OF RESILIENCE OF INUIT COMS. - RECOG.**

LISA LACHANCE: Unusakut, Mr. Speaker. This coming Sunday, November 7th, is International Inuit Day. This international day was established in 2006 by the Inuit Circumpolar Council. The majority of Inuit in Canada live in Inuit Nunangat. Inuit Nunangat includes four regions that span two provinces and two territories: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, and Inuvialuit.

Inuit Nunangat encompasses 35 per cent of Canada's land mass and 50 per cent of Canada's coastline.

Mr. Speaker, one always used to refer to "coast to coast to coast" to describe the whole of Canada. Despite a very recent history of colonization, Inuit communities demonstrate resilience, even as they are on the front line of climate change. Roughly 60 per cent of Inuit report an ability to conduct a conversation in Inuktitut. Inuit hunt and share country food, such as seal, narwhal, and caribou, to connect communities with traditions.

I ask all members of this House to recognize International Inuit Day.

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

**NEW ROSS 4-H HANDY HANDS CLUB:
EMPOWERING YOUTH TO REACH FULL POTENTIAL - RECOG.**

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday was 4-H Day but, unfortunately, I was not at the top of the list to speak.

Today I want to recognize a wonderful group of young people - the New Ross 4-H Handy Hands club. This group has members starting at age seven and going up to 21 years old and has been a key part of the New Ross community since 1943. The mission of 4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

The youth of New Ross have been "learning to do by doing" with livestock projects such as raising, showing, and selling light horses, goats, sheep, ducks, rabbits, and beef, as well as learning dog obedience and life skills projects such as cake decoration, woodworking, crafts, and cooking.

The club's members are also very active in county and provincial events, including the public speaking program, 4-H weekend, community competitions at the South Shore Exhibition, and the 4-H Provincial Show. While they've worked independently through COVID-19, they are excited to start their new season together next week.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the impact of the work of this club in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

HANDLEY, REBECCA: COM. SERV. - CONGRATS.

FRED TILLEY: Today I rise to congratulate and thank a young community volunteer named Rebecca Handley.

I first met Rebecca on the campaign trail at the Five Eleven Youth and Family Center in North Sydney. Rebecca is a phenomenal young volunteer in our community. She has created a number of programs, one being Island Angels, providing prom dresses for students in need who need a prom dress to look great at their prom.

The second one that she created is called the Kids Care program, a program getting young people involved in their community visiting seniors in long-term care homes, doing things in hospitals, and making our seniors feel welcome in the community.

She's also an accomplished student, having received the Lieutenant Governor's Award, and a varsity athlete as well. We all know that Rebecca has a bright future, and our community will benefit from her. Please join me in congratulating Rebecca on her hard work.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SMALLER HEARTS BAND: NOMIN. FOR N.S. MUSIC WEEK - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: As a big fan of local music, I am very happy that today marks the first day of Nova Scotia Music Week being held this year in Truro.

The artists who are nominated for Music Nova Scotia Awards that live in Dartmouth North span the genres of gospel, R&B, pop, hip-hop, and electronic. Dartmouth North residents Kristina Parlee and Ron Bates are the duo who comprise Smaller Hearts, one of the nominees for Electronic Artist of the Year. This year's nomination adds to nods in the same category in 2018 and 2019.

This past July, Smaller Hearts released the album *Attention*, which *The East* has dubbed a pop triumph. What is especially exciting about this album is that it was recorded primarily in Kristina and Ron's home in Dartmouth North.

Music can be a salve in difficult times, one that the group feels lucky to make. In the case of Smaller Hearts, though, it is the listeners who are lucky.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

**E. PASSAGE AND AREA BUS. ASSOC.:
BANNER PGM. HIGHLIGHTING LOCAL VETERANS - THANKS**

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: I rise today to thank the Eastern Passage and Area Business Association for recognizing veterans of Shearwater, Eastern Passage, and Cow Bay.

The EPABA, in collaboration with Legion Branch 164 and all levels of government, have developed a banner program that will highlight 20 local veterans with a banner display at the Legion for all to view and remember on November 11th.

Phase 2 of the program will see these banners and more hung on street poles throughout the communities for Remembrance Day 2022 and at other times throughout the year. This initiative truly reaches deep into our community's past, honouring families, fallen soldiers, and veterans.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in recognizing the EPABA members and the Legion for highlighting the stories of our veterans for us to remember as we approach this year's Remembrance Day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

**MORRISON, GERRY:
SURVIVING ABUSE AND SUCCESS AS ENTREPRENEUR - RECOG.**

BRAEDON CLARK: I just want to recognize my dear friend Gerry Morrison, who was in the gallery earlier today. As luck would have it, and I was very lucky in this case, Gerry lived three doors down from me growing up in Bedford and I got to know his family very well.

His son Brandon is one of my very best friends, has been, since Gerry's known me since I was about five or six years old. Despite suffering great abuse, harm, and trauma from people who were entrusted to care for him, Gerry is one of the kindest, funniest, just the most wonderful, giving, caring people I've ever had the privilege of meeting in my life.

He's a wonderful father, grandfather, husband, and boss. Gerry actually gave me my first job. Gerry is a successful entrepreneur. He's had an ice cream business here in the city for over 20 years with his wife, Roberta. A great boss and great human being. I just wanted to recognize Gerry.

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

**SOUTH BAR FIRE DEPT.:
HANDING OUT HALLOWEEN TREATS - THANKS**

KENDRA COOMBES: I rise today to recognize the members of the South Bar Fire Department, who handed out Halloween treats at the fire station to trick or treaters. It is a kind and giving gesture by a community organization that already gives so much of their time.

I also want to recognize the Reserve Mines Fire Department, the Seniors and Pensioners Club, and Lambert Todd Committee for their Halloween events of treats and fireworks at the Reserve fire station. It is fantastic to see community organizations coming together for the community.

I ask the House to join me in thanking the South Bar Fire Department, the Reserve Mines Fire Department, the Reserve Mines Seniors and Pensioners Club, and the Lambert Todd Committee for their community and Halloween spirit.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**SAMSON, ROD/FRASER, PETER/TRACEY, BARRY:
RECIPS. OF EHS LONG SERVICE AWDS. - CONGRATS.**

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Annually, EHS in Nova Scotia recognizes the long-standing service and dedication of paramedics who support our residents and communities through some of their most difficult times.

This year's recipients were honoured through a pre-recorded virtual ceremony in September. Three paramedics from Richmond County were recognized at the ceremony for their long service to our region: Rod Samson of Arichat Station received his Long Service Award for 25 years of service, Peter Fraser of St. Peter's Station received his Long Service Award for 25 years of service, and Barry Tracey of Arichat Station received his Long Service Award for 30 years of service.

Paramedics often go above and beyond to support their communities. While these three individuals have served our communities extremely well in their professional roles, they also all give back, as volunteers and community leaders and we are grateful for their support.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to take this opportunity to congratulate Rod, Peter, and Barry, on their Long Service Awards and would ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking all of our hard-working paramedics in our province for their outstanding service in support of the health and well-being of all Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honorable member for Annapolis.

**AUNTIE DORN'S:
RECIP. OF VALLEY'S BEST AWD. FOR BEST TAKE-OUT - CONGRATS.**

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the winner of Best Take-Out at the recent Valley's Best Awards: Auntie Dorn's Take-Out in Wilmot. 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 their efforts are appreciated by so many in the community.

This exceptional family-run operation offers a delicious menu that includes seafood, sandwiches, and burgers and is one of the best places in our area to stop on a hot Summer day for an ice cream treat. Auntie Dorn's is also committed to giving back to the community, including their Burger of the Week Club, where they offer a different fun and flavourful burger each week, with proceeds going to local charities.

I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the entire Auntie Dorn's team on being named best takeout at the recent Valley's Best Awards and thank them for their contribution to our communities.

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

**ATELIHAI INUIT:
SERVING INUIT POP. OF MARITIMES - THANKS**

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, Inuit in Canada often travel south for education, employment and health care. There are substantial Inuit communities in many cities, such as Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and across the Maritimes.

Since March 2019 Inuit in the Maritimes have had a new organization to support and unite them. Atelihai Inuit has a home base in the Halifax Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and works across the Maritimes uniting the Inuit community through events and services such as classes, craft classes, gatherings, traditional lessons, throat singing, traditional clothing workshops, and access to traditional country food.

Atelihai Inuit continues to raise awareness through monthly newsletters and networking with universities and colleges, local hospitals, recovery centres and other organizations serving the Inuit population of the Maritimes.

Mr. Speaker, let us all show our gratitude to the staff, boards and members of Atelihai Inuit.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

FLEMMING, DON: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour Don Flemming. Don Flemming passed away suddenly on October 12, 2021. As a board member of CIOE 97.5 Radio and host of the station's highly popular radio program *Memories of the 50s, 60s and 70s*, Don attracted listeners from all over the globe, sharing his insightful voice and musical knowledge of artists from those eras.

Besides his dedication to CIOE 97.5 radio, Don also was the president of the Cobequid Cultural Society and the main driving force behind the proposed performing arts centre planned for Middle Sackville.

Don leaves behind a legacy of live music, entertaining, and performing arts advocacy excellence and will be missed dearly by his listeners, colleagues, friends, and most of all, his family.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in honouring Don Flemming for his unselfish contributions.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

MEMBERS FOR DART. S. AND QUEENS: WORK IN HOUSE - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, with the last minute I do want to rise in my place to recognize two of my colleagues in the House, the member for Dartmouth South and the member for Queens-Shelburne. Pending any unforeseen circumstances, we're coming close to the end of the session. It's been an honour to be the House Leader with both of them on the Official Opposition. The member for Queens-Shelburne has a very large portfolio, and is handling this, too, as well. She has been great to deal with, as has the member for Dartmouth South.

I rise in my place to recognize both of them. You are both way more organized than I am, so thank you so much. It has been an honour and I look forward to the time when we can sit down when this session is over.

[2:00 p.m.]

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

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

THE SPEAKER: The time is now 2:00 p.m. We'll finish at 2:50 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - SKILL TRADES: HIGH SCHOOLS - ACCESS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: My questions today are starting around skill trades.

I commend the government's commitment to investing more in this very important, growing sector. In their platform, they highlighted a promise to double the amount of skill trades students we have across the province from 1,000 to around 2,000. We have 31 skill trades centres across the province.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Does he think that he'll be able to build another 31, and will every student have the opportunity to access skill trades in high school in this province?

THE PREMIER: I thank the member for this important question.

We know the housing crisis we have in this province, and we know the shortage we have in the skill trades, really, across the province. We've taken a couple of initiatives. We believe our initiative to have no personal provincial income tax on the first \$50,000 for those working in the skill trades under 30 will help address some of the shortage.

Certainly at the high school level and through the Nova Scotia Community College, we're definitely optimistic about the ability to train many more people and prepare them for a career in the skilled trades.

IAIN RANKIN: My follow-up actually speaks to Nova Scotia Community College. We have opportunities after they get out of high school and there are wait-lists for a lot of these skill trade opportunities. That's going to need to be addressed by increasing the seats. I've referenced that many times on health care, but skill trades are going to need to be filled because this is an opportunity for the province.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Will he increase the seats at Nova Scotia Community College for trades, and will he make special dedicated seats for underrepresented communities?

THE PREMIER: Some of the focus on attracting Nova Scotians into the skilled trades - certainly there's a focus on underrepresented communities through the high school programs and through the community college program. We're going to work with all levels of education and Nova Scotians to really demonstrate to them the potential for a career, for a future in the skilled trades. We think it's a great opportunity for many Nova Scotians, and we'll be focusing on attracting people from all ends of this province, from all communities in this province, into the skilled trades.

IAIN RANKIN: One of the reasons why I'm referencing this is because of the transition that we're going through, especially with coal now legislated to close in nine years. That can be a short time, Mr. Speaker, so we need to get people trained for the opportunities and make sure that this is a just transition.

We were proposing as a government to go further with micro-credentialing, 6,000 seats to get people more certification, and ensuring that they had that lifelong learning.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier: Will he make sure that he increases these training opportunities, especially ensuring that all the workers who are associated with the coal-fired generation plants who work for Nova Scotia Power will have a seat in this training opportunity? Will he offer them free tuition?

THE PREMIER: No question. As the economy changes, as the world changes, as what's acceptable changes, industries change, and we want to make sure that there are no Nova Scotians left behind, that they all have opportunities in this province. Whether that means they're retraining and finding a new future, a new career in this province, we'll be there for them.

Specifically in terms of people working in coal-dominated industries, Nova Scotia Power comes to mind. I know Nova Scotia Power has indicated to us that they're working closely with employees who may be displaced by a transition. That's not just on them. It's on us as a Province to make sure that Nova Scotians see an opportunity to thrive in this province. They will never be far from our line of sight as we move forward in this province.

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

PREM.: MIN. WAGE - FAIRNESS

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has said here this week that he prefers to focus on the role of employers and businesses in setting wages, rather than on the minimum wage, but there are many corporations which, if they are permitted to, will pay so little that their employees will constantly be going under.

Approximately 40,000 people in Nova Scotia make minimum wage. They're the people who work in grocery stores, cleaners, servers, hotel staff, and others - all of whom look to the government of their province to determine a better standard for their wages.

Does the Premier really think \$12.95 is a fair or acceptable standard for the government to be setting?

THE PREMIER: We know what the cost of living is. We know the pressures on families and that there are a lot of Nova Scotians who are struggling.

We also know that, I think, roughly half of the 40,000 minimum wage workers in this province have a post-secondary education. We also have an obligation to make sure that they can find a career in their chosen line of study.

There are labour shortages in some industries. There are opportunities in this province. We just need to make sure that as a government we do what's necessary to properly train people and to match them up with the opportunities that may already exist in this province and may pay \$20 and \$25 an hour and can't be filled as we sit here today.

GARY BURRILL: The Premier has continued through this week's discussion on this subject to say that his focus is not on the minimum wage as much as it is on growth and on jobs. As the front page of today's business section of *The Chronicle Herald* makes clear, you don't get growth if the jobs pay so little that nobody wants to take them.

Tim Rissesco, executive director with the Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission, said as much lately when he said that raising wages is one way to bring back workers to industries experiencing a shortage.

Will the Premier acknowledge that low wages in our economy are actually holding back and suppressing our economic growth?

THE PREMIER: What I would say again to the member is that when companies need to fill their jobs, if they can't fill their jobs, they go out of business.

I think it's not just on the government to set the wages of the province. Industry has a responsibility there too. I know there are lots of companies that are already offering \$20 or \$25 an hour. I don't know what the honourable member would say to that; are those companies offering too much? The industry will, when they want to survive - they have to pay the proper amount.

Government has a responsibility to be compassionate and be thoughtful and care for people in this province. There's a labour shortage in many industries in this province and it's not driven by the minimum wage set by the province.

GARY BURRILL: The Premier continues to miss the point. It's missed again in the Premier's comments in today's paper, where he asserts that employment, somehow, is going to be diminished by having a progressive minimum wage.

He continues to say this as though he's saying something that's got some economic foundation, but this has zero foundation. This is an idea that has been refuted in research. The refutation has just been awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in the work of a Canadian, David Card.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier please give this unfounded idea, as he has expressed it today in the paper, a rest and address the real situations of the 40,000 minimum wage earners in our province who are looking to his government for improvement in their situations.

THE PREMIER: In addressing the real situation, as the member references, what I would also speak to is the real situation that I see and that I hear.

I'm travelling a province that's coming out of a pandemic and coming out of an economy that's trying to rebuild in many industries - lots of companies are out of business - and speaking to real people and real business owners about the prospects.

We can quote different theoretical, academic studies from both sides of any single argument. They'll probably find one today that'll try to convince me it's not really Thursday.

What I'm focused on is the economy of this province and making sure that every Nova Scotian has an opportunity in this province and sees themselves as being able to thrive right here in Nova Scotia. It's not driven by the minimum wage.

I don't know many Nova Scotians that grow up thinking, boy, I hope I make minimum wage when I grow up. That's not the way people think. They want real jobs.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition

PREM. - ATL. LOOP: REG. MIN. - UPDATE

HON. IAIN RANKIN: After today, by 2030 coal will become illegal to be burned in this province. I'd like to get an update from the Premier. He must be confident that the Atlantic Loop project will proceed so that we will be able get off coal by that deadline, which will become a legislative requirement.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Can he provide an update to the House on how his discussions are going with the regional ministers that we know he met with recently?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, we all share the goal of getting off coal in this province. We've heard some debate in the last few days as to whether we're ambitious enough or too ambitious, but we share the common goal.

I would tell the member that we're very focused on greening the grid in this province. That will require partnership with the federal government, no question, and discussions are ongoing.

IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, we are on the same page of getting off coal, but we are asking to make sure that everything is going on in the timeline, because it was very preliminary just months ago, and we need to see some movement on this important file. We know the request is \$2 billion for the province, \$3 billion for New Brunswick, and there is an associated ask for workers. This is all contingent on federal funds flowing through the province.

If the federal government goes not step up to provide funds for workers, I'd like to ask the Premier: Will he specifically dedicate money for the workers for retraining? He answered part of this in a previous question. Will he dedicate funding, as we did for the forestry industry, with a trust? Will he dedicate money to ensure that no worker is left behind in this transition?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, nobody wants any Nova Scotian left behind in any aspect. We're working hard with the federal government. I know that my colleagues opposite will also support Nova Scotians in the initiative to encourage the federal government to invest in the Atlantic Loop. I look forward to pushing that encouragement to the federal government in a respectful way together.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

PREM.: FIXED ELECTION DATE - POSITION

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The PC Party platform talks about the importance of civics as an education plank. It says, "Voting matters. Making informed voting decisions matters. Democratic societies function best with informed citizens. In order for that to happen, individuals, in this case our youth, need to understand their role and rights as a citizen."

I agree. However, would the Premier agree that he has dramatically undermined this position - his very own position - by forcing through a July fixed election date bill?

THE PREMIER: Absolutely not, for all the reasons we've articulated many times, Mr. Speaker.

BRAEDON CLARK: I appreciate that the Premier has put forward reasons. I would submit that none of them made much sense.

The section in the platform about civics also talks about teachers. It says, "Our goal is to work with teachers to make sure it" - civics - "becomes a part of our students' education. None of this will be possible without supporting teachers."

Every teacher who spoke at Law Amendments Committee opposed the bill that was passed. Every student opposed the bill. The president of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union opposed the concept.

I would ask the Premier: Does he agree that he supported teachers through this process?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the honourable member to have a look around and answer the question for himself. If he thinks that this government is suppressing youth with a July election, what in the world was his own government doing with an August election?

[2:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

AGRIC. - N.S. PROV. EX. COMM'N.: MEETING - DETAILS

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, one of the oldest and most successful industries in rural Nova Scotia is agriculture. It has grown and diversified and continues to have a positive impact on the economy of our province. Since 1940, the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition complex has hosted and promoted all aspects of the industry in Atlantic Canada. In 1946, the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission was established and given the mandate to oversee and manage the operations of the complex.

My question to the Minister of Agriculture is: Has the minister had the opportunity to meet with the members of the commission to discuss the future of the facility, and if so, when did that meeting take place?

HON. GREG MORROW: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the member opposite for the question.

I've had a chance to tour the facility and speak to members of my department, and I thank them for their tour and their briefings and the much work that has gone on. At this point, that's where we stand, and we continue to look forward to increased activities in 2022.

KEITH IRVING: I hope the minister will make the time to meet with the commission in the near future.

This complex includes a recently constructed 4-H building, as well as an outdoor riding and show ring and the enclosed MacMillan Show Centre. These facilities have been home to many provincial 4-H events, including the annual Pro Show where clubs from across the province come to showcase their work. Parents, friends, leaders, visitors, but

most important, club members truly and proudly welcome the opportunity to participate. These young people are the learners of today and the learners of tomorrow.

My question for the minister is: Do the plans of this PC government for the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Complex include the continuation and support of 4-H activities?

GREG MORROW: Mr. Speaker, thanks again for the question. I was starting to feel left out from the first part of the session, so now we're making up for lost time, so I do appreciate that - two in two days.

Short answer is yes, we want to continue to work with 4-H. We realize, I realize, my department realizes, how important this venue is to the community - Truro-Bible Hill - and to the entire province. We want to continue to make sure that it is a successful facility.

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

LSI: ISLAND EMP. - FORENSIC AUDIT

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 and made a number of recommendations. One recommendation to the department was to assess whether any of the findings required a forensic audit. The minister has said in response to my questions, "these findings were very serious."

Mr. Speaker, will the minister agree to conduct the forensic audit which the union representing the workers has called for?

HON. JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for the important question.

The recommendations in the Ombudsman report, the majority of them have taken place, some of which are still in the works. It's really important that, yes, the significant findings in the Ombudsman report indicated mishandling of funds, and that's what we made our decision on was exactly that.

To the employees, I really want to make sure that they know that we're committed to finding another service provider and as quickly as possible. The decisions around the organization were not actually government decisions that were made, but again, just want you to know that the recommendations that were given were implemented, and some of them which are still in the works.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I can only assume that that's a no to the forensic audit.

The Ombudsman did not recommend these 30 employees be laid off. That was a decision made by the government, and it is the minister who is now encouraging the workers of Island Employment to apply for advertised jobs with lesser pay and benefits. Meanwhile, the board, management, and those responsible for the government oversight are being let off the hook.

Will the minister explain why she chose to terminate the agreement with Island Employment rather than addressing the concerns as outlined in the Ombudsman's recommendations?

JILL BALSER: We know that the employees - this decision really impacted them, and we know that. I just want them to know that we see them, and we know the services that they were providing were really great. That's another reason why we're working so hard to make sure that another service provider is in place.

One thing that's really important is that the organization's decision to close was not a government decision. We are working really hard to make sure that there is a new service provider in place. There is an interim provider right now that the employees can go and find jobs and apply right now. Jobs will be available under that new service provider, and we just want the employees to know that we know they were doing good work. Our decision was around the handling of the funds.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

DCS - GOV'T.: HOMELESSNESS - VISION

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, an individual who was homeless, cold, and wet reached out to my office for housing assistance. He'd been told about the government's new announcement around homelessness and was excited. My CA reached out to DCS and was told that the individual was eligible for shelter, therefore he could not get a hotel room.

We were also told that if he wanted a hotel room, he needed a medical excuse and to go get a doctor's note.

Mr. Speaker, we know that shelters are full and hotel rooms are empty.

My question to the Minister of Community Services is: Is this really the government's vision around homelessness and housing?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, to the member, absolutely not. If the member would like to have his CA contact me, I will certainly follow up on this specific case. It's always our intention to work with individuals and ensure that everyone has permanent housing.

I commend the staff. There have been a lot of cases going through. Our doors are open to speak to everyone. If there is an issue, I absolutely want to know about it so that I can solve it. I look forward to speaking to the member about this specific case.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I am glad the minister said that there are a lot of cases going through, because that fits nicely into my next question.

This individual is not the only one who has met resistance. There are tents still popping up and propped up all around the HRM. There are people living in those tents and they are living homeless.

The feeling around the Legislature is that we are probably on our final days here. I want to ask the minister: Since this government announced this homelessness and housing strategy, how many individuals have been housed in hotels? Will she table that number, and money spent on hotels and wraparound services, in this Legislature before Question Period tomorrow for all to see?

KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, this is a serious issue in Nova Scotia. It's unfortunate that the government before us allowed it to escalate this far, but it does take all of us to solve the problem.

Again, I don't have those specific numbers here today. I know that we have been with our announcement making progress, but I'd be more than happy to get those numbers and table them. I hope I can get those as soon as possible for the member, but again, this has to be solved by all of us doing our part.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

SLTC: LONG-TERM CARE WAIT-LIST - ACTION

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, earlier this week we were pleased to see the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care announce that she would continue to implement recommendations from our expert panel on long-term care, which we struck back in 2019.

Also this week we learned that 16 long-term care facilities are no longer taking residents. I'll table that. We heard the Premier say that things were going to get worse before they got better but 16, wow. That is unprecedented.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care was clear that she had a plan to improve long-term care when she was on this side of the House. Aside from the expert panel recommendations, what other concrete actions has the minister taken to ensure that no more long-term care homes close to admissions?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. There are a whole lot of numbers that we are given and my recollection from the briefing that I was given is that in fact there were 10 homes that had ceased admission when I took over. Certainly because of the shortages that were created over the last eight years, we are up to 16 now.

We are working very diligently on that with all of the providers as well, and of course we made an announcement on Monday about the recruitment of CCAs and a number of other initiatives. We made an announcement a few weeks before that for 13 clinical nurse practitioners, and there is much more to come.

KELLY REGAN: So back in September, four long-term care homes stopped admitting residents, and the 16 were outlined in the article that I just tabled, if the minister wants to check on that. Now we're in November and it's 16, so that's four times as many. Do we have to wait another two months, when there will be 64 not taking residents? Remember, this happened under the minister's watch, so this government needs to take the concerns of CCAs seriously . . . (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The member for Bedford Basin has the floor.

KELLY REGAN: This government needs to take the concerns of CCAs seriously. Give them opportunities to progress in their careers. Pay them more. What is the minister's plan for addressing the growing wait-list of Nova Scotians who are waiting for admission to long-term care?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: As the minister of this department, I take full responsibility for everything going on in my department. I will say that the announcement that we made on Monday was funding that was approved by the former government that they never got around to announcing or spending - but we're walking the walk.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

DHW: NO HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION - EXPLAIN

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: This government was elected on a singular issue. It was to fix health care. In the previous session of the Legislature, this government tabled no less than 16 pieces of legislation to do just that and advance their issue.

We have actually seen a fairly rapid and drastic worsening of our health care system since this government has taken power. Specifically, unprecedented provincewide Code Criticals on multiple days, emergency department closures that are increasing, 16 long-term care facilities that are not receiving residents. These did not happen under the previous government. An increase in the unattached patient list.

Despite that, this government has not tabled ...

THE SPEAKER: Is there a question?

ZACH CHURCHILL: ... one piece of legislation to advance their agenda. Why not?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: To the member, I would like to tell you what it was like working as a frontline health care worker under your government for the last eight years. I'm going to tell you something. It got worse every day. You didn't listen to a word we said. You didn't help when we asked.

I'm going to tell you right now: things are going to get better every day under this government. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: I just want everybody to remember once more that you do not say "you" to the member you're speaking to. You're going through the Speaker to the questioner.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I do want to thank the minister. I know that she served the system very well in her previous commitment as a frontline nurse. (Applause) I certainly know that she will apply those skills to her current role in what I hope to be a very effective way.

We are going to assess the success of this government on the outcomes that we do see, not just on the intentions, of course. There is no question in terms of the intentions that this government has regarding health care, but we have not seen legislation tabled in this House to advance the agenda that this government did promise Nova Scotians.

One of the things that we did see that I will ask the Premier: We did get rid of Dr. Brendan Carr, who was a leading physician administrator ... (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Question, please.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I wonder if eliminating him and appointing a partisan might be impacting the operational outcomes that we're seeing currently.

THE PREMIER: Absolutely not. The former Health and Wellness Minister, former Minister of Municipal Affairs, would fully understand the situations we have. The crisis we have in health care, the crisis we have in housing - all of these things that developed and exacerbated under that former minister in those capacities.

What I would remind the member is not everything the government does requires a bill in this Legislature. We've opened an acute treatment centre, we've started to address

the transfer system, we are actually working with health care professionals, and I will thank the member for agreeing to judge us on our success or failure. That is how I hope he judges us in the fullness of time, but I'll leave with one thought, and health care professionals know this because they feel it every day: Change is coming.

[2:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

EECD: PRE-PRIMARY CLASSES - CAP

SUZY HANSEN: Let's bring the tone down a little, Mr. Speaker. (Laughter) My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The department website states that pre-Primary classes will be made up of two early childhood educators, ECEs, and 20 children. Where a group is over 20 children to a maximum of 24 children, a third early childhood educator will be added - and I'll table that.

We have heard from members of the public that there are some pre-Primary classes with up to 30 children. Will the minister explain if there is a cap on the number of pre-Primary children in a class or not?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: This is the first that I'm learning, from the member, of this particular question. I'm happy to take it away and come back to her on the specifics of the issue and the individual classes that she's referring to.

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, in July an audit by the Auditor General found that the implementation of pre-Primary was rushed and not adequately planned - and I'll table that.

The previous government passed amendments to the Pre-primary Education Act in 2017. However, there are still no regulations for the Act. The early learning and child care regulations are where we will find all the details on standards for child care, including class sizes and staff ratios.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development: When will class caps and staffing ratios for pre-Primary be confirmed in regulations? I appreciate the conversation you just said about getting back to me. I await that information.

BECKY DRUHAN: I really can't speak to what the prior government did or did not do to implement things.

I can say that the department and the regions and that early childhood educators have worked very, very hard and done a really good job standing up that system. I'm looking forward to working with all those teams going forward to make the operations even better than they are and to ensure that they're bolstered and supported by whatever legislation and regulations are needed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

OEARI - LAND TITLES INITIATIVE: SHORT-STAFFED - SUPPORT

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, the acceleration of the Land Titles Initiative was implemented also with additional supports which was meant to increase the capacity of legal services. I previously asked a question about the Land Titles Initiative and the government informed me that 275 active cases and files were currently ongoing.

My question is: There are two staff lawyers at Nova Scotia Legal Aid currently doing this work - what is this minister going to do to address these gaps within the legal services and the application process?

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned earlier there are approximately 883 cases that are available right now. Within the boundaries there are approximately 252 that are completed. Also, there are another 275 cases that are active at the moment.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: I thank the minister for reiterating what I just asked about the 275 active files, so I'll propose this question to the Minister of Justice.

There is a current RFP out to acquire legal services to support the two lawyers at Nova Scotia Legal Aid. This contract currently ends in March of 2022. What is the next step and status of this current RFP?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I don't know the specifics on this. I can find out and let you know.

I do know that - or my understanding is that currently those two solicitors are looking at a specific five communities. I'm sure as some of those wrap up, they'll be freed up to look at others. I'll find out from the department and let you know.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

ANSA: WORKING GROUP STATUS - UPDATE

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, my question will be for the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

It's unfortunate that race is a factor in accessing care. Our government initiated a collection of, and in interpreting race-based data, health data. It was a priority in identifying the inequities in the health care system. There is a need to make better evidence-based health decisions for racialized people.

A primary reference working group was formed to lead the communications and the consultations. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, but this is an important question, though.

My question to the minister is: What is the status of that initiative, please?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I want to assure the member opposite that the work is still happening with the primary reference working group, and they continue to do stakeholder gatherings under the direction of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office. I know that that work is ongoing and is moving forward very well.

If there's anything specific that you want to know about the work, I'd be happy to get that for you and share it.

TONY INCE: Thank you for that answer, and I thank you that work is going on, but there was a bit of a pause in that work because First Nations have existing data sharing agreements with federal and provincial governments, developed through First Nations-led initiatives over the past decade.

Conversations with Mi'kmaw health leaders have been ongoing to determine how they might engage in this process. Can you tell this House where those conversations are?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Thank you for the question. The work with Tajikeyimik continues. I know that I have an upcoming stakeholder gathering with them. I just had a briefing about the health and wellness of First Nation communities and that initiative this week, so we're really looking forward to meeting with that stakeholder group and understanding how they're moving the health of their communities forward, and how we can share the learnings from there with other diverse populations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

DCS: LACK OF APPROPRIATE HOUSING - COMMENT

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: My question is to the Minister of Community Services.

Community Services has been going through what's called a transformation that involves moving vulnerable persons from an institution-like setting more into the community and to a home environment with the goal of helping them to become more independent, but often without the services and supports that they need.

Sunset Community residential care facility in Cumberland North has had nearly \$14 million of infrastructure spent in the last few years. Meanwhile, they're expected to move residents out of that safe place into communities, despite that there's actually no housing available.

My question to the minister is: Is the minister speaking with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing about this problem of lack of available housing, and are they considering placing this transformation on hold because of that?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Those conversations are always ongoing. We know that we have a challenging housing crisis here in Nova Scotia, but we do have navigators and counsellors working on this situation. If there's any individual specifically that the member needs to find help with, we're certainly available to discuss that and see what we can come up with.

Of course, there are always discussions and dialogue always going on between my colleagues.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: There's been a lot of concern around the transformation, even before this recent housing crisis. That is, sometimes people are being moved into the community, sometimes maybe incorrectly, and the problems seem to be being pushed under the rug.

For example, a couple of years ago, Dale and Laurie Lorette came to me asking for help. Their son Blake, who has been severely autistic, non-verbal since he was three, was moved from Kings Residential Centre into a home that they believe did not provide for his unique needs. As a result, he was in an accident and he nearly lost his life. They've been asking questions since then, in 2018, and they've not been given answers.

My question to the minister is: Based on this experience, where someone allegedly was moved into the community and really needed the supports that could only be provided by the institution, should this whole transformation be re-examined for that reason, for the safety, but also because of the housing crisis?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Everyone deserves dignity and choice and independence and finding a living environment that is conducive to their needs. That's always a priority of mine.

Although I can't speak to the specifics of the member - who they are referring to - I will say this: I'm very aware of the case. I'm very well aware that the member has advocated for them and has written a number of letters. I believe the previous government didn't respond but I can assure you this: you'll have a letter soon.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

NRR: BURNING OF BIOMASS - COMMENT

CLAUDIA CHENDER: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. The climate crisis leaves us no time for loopholes, but a new report called *Missing the Forest: How Carbon Loopholes for Logging Hinder Canada's Climate Leadership* points to the many ways that Canada fails to fully account for carbon emissions in the forestry industry. In particular, they note that calculations of burning biomass for electricity do not account for emissions coming from full supply chain including forestry practices and transportation.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House if, in his view, burning biomass for electricity is actually carbon neutral?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: I do know that the conversations for the last number of years have included biomass burning and small-scale wood chip burning - which is something the previous government alluded to after the Lahey report came out - something we were very clear of in and around the Northern Pulp issue in 2020.

We certainly looked at biomass burning as a party. Is it efficient just to be doing electricity? No. I'm an electrician by trade. I know a little bit about power generation. There are other aspects of biomass burning that we can actually achieve and achieve it in an environmental way. I'm not talking about cutting round wood to be throwing it in. I'm talking about the pulpwood, the residuals of the mills - actual pulpwood and low-grade wood fibre. I can say right now that this government certainly would not stand behind us taking round logs in order to create a biomass economy here in Nova Scotia.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: We are talking about biomass for electricity in this case, and that latter example that the minister gave.

Mr. Speaker, in 2010, the provincial renewable electricity plan did commit to using biomass for electricity to meet 2015 renewable targets but cautioned against using it long-term. The authors strongly advised that its use be revisited in favour of more sustainable options. This has not happened, but many Nova Scotians want to see it done.

This past Summer, in public consultations for the province's climate plan, Nova Scotians voiced strong opposition to burning biomass for electricity. Will the minister commit to a full life-cycle analysis of the emissions of electricity generated by biomass before the climate plan for clean growth is released?

TORY RUSHTON: I know that the member is very passionate about the issue in and around the biomass and the efficiency of just creating electricity with the burning of biomass. What I will commit to today is the bill that will be up for third reading to do with climate change and how this government's going to work with the members opposite to

protect our climate, to protect our environment, and to ensure that we're going to get off coal.

I guarantee to the member opposite that we're certainly going to have a deep look into what biomass will look like for the province of Nova Scotia and how we're going to move away from that coal but utilize the resources that we do still have here in the province of Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

LSI: NSGEU MEETING REQUEST - COMMENT

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration. It's around Island Employment, and I'll table this. Jason MacLean, who we all know is the president of the NSGEU, has requested a meeting with the minister to talk about the situation on the ground in Sydney when it comes to island employment.

My question to the minister is: Has she confirmed that she will meet with Jason MacLean, who is representing the workers?

HON. JILL BALSER: I know that this issue is really important to all of my colleagues from Cape Breton and in this area. Again, I want to speak to the employees that we want to make sure that they are treated fairly in this transition. We're going to go above and beyond the collective agreement that is in place. I will commit to meeting with folks who want to have that conversation with me, absolutely.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I really appreciate the answer from the minister and her commitment. I'll reiterate: Jason MacLean represents those workers.

I can totally appreciate that there are a number of moving parts with this. There's one thing that is happening that we haven't talked about here. These workers are being branded in some cases of doing something wrong and they really didn't do anything wrong at all. They have hundreds of files where they're supporting families all over the community that are trying to transition back into the workforce. That's a big concern for me, that in my conversations with them they feel like they've done something wrong when they actually haven't.

My follow-up question to the minister - or anyone - there's a few departments in this case, I reiterate, meet with Jason MacLean and the NSGEU so that he can bring those concerns forward also because that is a major issue for them and their families.

JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, again, thank you to the member opposite for the important question. Again, we know that this is really important and we will commit to having those meetings. Again, we know the employees were doing exceptional work. The

challenges were with the handling of the funds, so again that goes back to the management, that's where we had concerns.

We know the employees were offering exceptional services and doing really good work. I know that everyone is concerned around that and we are, too. We want to make sure there is a smooth transition, that there is an interim provider in place, that we get a new provider as soon as possible and that we support the employees in that transition, which again is another reason why we're going to go above and beyond that collective agreement, so that they are treated fairly.

[2:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

RTA: UTILITY COST TO RENTERS - COMMENT

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Residential Tenancies Act. Several constituents in the last couple of weeks have come to my office in Annapolis. According to them, landlords have informed them that they will now be responsible for paying their own utilities where previously these costs were included in their rent.

We currently have a rent cap of 2 per cent in this province, as we all know, but adding these costs of utilities can result in an effective increase much greater than 2 per cent. My question to the minister: Is he aware of this practice?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I am really happy with our government's actions to initially modernize the Residential Tenancies Act. As I said on the floor of this Legislature, there's more action to come as we continue to look to balance the rights and needs of both the tenant and landlord communities.

What I'd say to all Nova Scotians if they do have concerns regarding the relationship between the tenant and landlord of either party, that they submit an application to the residential tenancies program. They are the subject matter experts dealing with these files.

CARMAN KERR: I want to thank the minister for that response. Merci beaucoup pour la réponse. C'est correct? Yes.

It appears according to staff that work at residential tenancies in the department that this practice may contravene the Act currently. My question to the minister: Is there a timeline that the minister could comment on to make sure that this practice doesn't continue?

COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague opposite. I'll certainly have those discussions with staff, but again I'll reiterate that when it comes to any disputes, whether it be from the tenant or from a landlord, fundamentally it's the Residential Tenancies Program, that's what it's there for. It is a cost-effective, efficient program that seeks to resolve disputes between tenants and landlords.

Again, any questions regarding any of those kinds of disputes should be directed through the program.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

DHW: BAYERS LAKE CENTRE OPENING - UPDATE

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The demand for medical services in my fast-growing community of Clayton Park West and the nearby communities has increased immensely and she knows the boom there.

As I knocked on doors during the election I had two questions: When is the outpatient centre in Bayers Lake going to open, and will it have emergency services?

My question to the minister is: Could the minister let us know, will this centre offer some kind of emergency services at the Bayers Lake Outpatient Centre, please?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I don't have a timeline for that today, but I can certainly look into that for you. What we've done is try to increase access, primary care access throughout the province by increasing virtual health, and trying to recruit and retain folks. I don't have a timeline for you on that particular project, but I can get back to you.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Just to add to that, because of the emergency Halifax Infirmary and that the Cobequid Community Health Centre is always full, we really need that. There is talk of a walk-in clinic at the outpatient centre ...

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, before we go into Government Business, if I could just ask the members - the two books that are circulating around for signature for

Tony and Gerry, if you could please have those returned to the Speaker, that would be fabulous.

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: The motion is carried.

We will just take a short pause for the committee to set up.

[2:56 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Lisa Lachance in the Chair.]

[3:05 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Lisa Lachance took the Chair.]

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

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

Bill No. 68 - Executive Council Act and Public Service Act.

Bill No. 71 - Tourism Nova Scotia Dissolution Act.

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

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mx. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Third Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mx. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 63.

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. JOHN LOHR: I move that Bill No. 63 be now read a third time.

I do have some remarks and will make them to close third reading. I look forward to hearing comments from the members of the House.

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

LORELEI NICOLL: I know that, at this point of the process, I am going to sound repetitive, but I'm hoping my concerns will be actually heard.

I stated before that the housing crisis has occurred due to the lack of affordable housing. This government continues to push the idea that the housing crisis is merely a supply and demand issue and that if we increase the housing stock without looking at affordability, somehow housing prices will drop to more affordable levels. In pressing the idea of increasing housing stock only, we risk flooding the housing market with more market-rate luxury apartments on the assumption that rent prices will drop in time. We have heard it here many times: We are in a housing crisis. We cannot afford time in a crisis.

Many see this bill as an infringement on HRM, its elected officials, and its qualified personnel, but I see it as especially on the extensive public input that was provided in creating the regional plan since 2006 and continues to do so through its five-year reviews. In developing the regional plan, many other plans were approved by council: the Moving Forward Together Plan, on transit; the Green Network Plan, and HalifACT, the climate change plan.

This bill proposes to have a five-year master plan. This time frame will be challenging if it's to be all-encompassing. HRM's regional plan identified, and I have said it here before, 37,000 residential units that could go straight to building permit and for site plan approvals. I'll table that report.

It was interesting that many people don't realize, and I don't hear it in here but, for some reason even listening to my favourite rock station, the radio announcer said, "I'm reporting today from one of the gazillion cranes in the downtown."

I have mentioned my concerns many times about the lack of public engagement being carried out as we work with this group. This government's own Throne Speech speaks to this issue. It states, "A healthy government is one where Nova Scotians have the information and opportunity to hold their government to account." We welcome this and will provide members of the public and members of the Legislative Assembly with the tools to do so. Yet this government has not provided this information nor an opportunity for this House or the public, even through the Law Amendments Committee.

Nova Scotians deserve transparency on how the government is dealing with this housing crisis. Knowing what developments are being recommended, where they are being developed, and who specifically is developing them will help ensure accountability and ensure that this government is increasing the number of affordable units as promised, rather than just increasing the stock of a higher rent development.

All I can say at this point is please hear my concerns. Listen to everyone who has expressed themselves with their concerns. We are all passionate in this House in our respective roles, myself included as the Critic for Municipal Affairs and Housing. I truly hope - as the Premier said, we will be judged in the future by their actions. I truly hope that we will not be judging this government for their lack of action when it comes to affordable housing.

I would like to see this government understand the situation better, adhere to the plans in place that HRM has, and respect the voices and time it took to have the great work that already exists. I would like to hear comments from the minister that will allay my concerns that I have expressed here today. Thank you.

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

KENDRA COOMBES: Mx. Chair - or Mx. Speaker, now that we are in Third Reading - I have many concerns about this bill and we will not be supporting it. Surprise, isn't it, Mx. Speaker. At Law Amendments and at Committee of the Whole House on Bills, our Party put forward amendments that would have improved this bill and reflected some of the concerns that we heard from the HRM, with whom this government, by its own account, is trying to work collaboratively.

Mx. Speaker, if the inclusionary zoning legislation is empowering, this bill is the hammer. I have said this before. There is no denying it. This bill is the Tory government's usurpation of the HRM's Charter and MGA. It goes against everything as councillors - and there are councillors across the aisle who I know, whom I have served with, whom I have gone to conferences with, and it has been drilled into our collective heads about public hearings and transparency. This bill takes away all of that.

As councillors, we always say we want to work with the provincial government. We want the provincial government to work with us. When the provincial government did, it was great, and when they didn't, it was very difficult to swallow - the fact that they wouldn't work with us. This concept of not collaborating and not consulting the municipalities, particularly the HRM, is again a slap in the face, as I said before. The HRM has said that they want to collaborate. Mayor Savage said at Law Amendments: I prefer collaboration over legislation.

Councillor Sam Austin told Law Amendments that he would have fully supported a bill in a panel or some other form to look at the planning practices in HRM from both a

municipal and provincial point of view to see what changes we could make. Goodness knows that we are not infallible.

Knowing that this bill would pass regardless of what they said, regardless of what they asked, both the mayor and Councillor Austin specifically talked about the need for a process that keeps planning open to the public.

Mayor Savage: We're building a city in 2021, not 1961. We have to make sure the public has an opportunity to be a part of this.

From Councillor Sam Austin: We're taking a public process and replacing it with a behind-closed-doors one. That makes it even worse, and I will table that.

The stakes of planning in public rather than in private were elaborated quite well by Kortney Dunsby from the Ecology Action Centre: Members should have the right to shape the future of their community. The field of planning has an ugly history of wielding its power to disenfranchise traditionally marginalized groups; actions that this city is still healing from today. She also says: Through this legislation about housing, it is legislation that will impact entire communities.

The amendments put forward would not have made this bill perfect by any means, by any stretch of the imagination. It still would have been a bill that gave the province and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing far too much power. However, it would have ensured at least that planning done by this panel would not be done behind closed doors.

We made amendments. They were not passed, obviously, Mx. Speaker. I just feel that this is a bad bill. We could have made it an okay bill, but the government side chose not to do that; the government side chose not to listen to the HRM, their partner. They chose to ignore the mayor. They chose to ignore the council. For that, this is not how to have a good working relationship, as far as I'm concerned.

Again, we will not be supporting this bill. With that I'll take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HON. KEITH IRVING: I think the House knows how I feel about this bill from previous readings, and obviously no changes have been made.

I've been thinking a little bit about how this bill is going to work in practice. As some may know, I spent seven years in municipal politics and chaired planning committees and dealt with many planning applications at the planning table and at council. They are always a place of tension between the community's wishes and the developer's wishes and ambitions and their bottom line.

I think about the times that developers have tried to work around issues of adequate parking spaces for their developments or taking a whole front yard in a neighbourhood and paving it over for parking for student housing. Building heights have always raised challenges at these decision tables. It is the laws that give the decision-makers the confidence to say what has to be; they provide the guideposts for these difficult decisions, when there is community against developer.

I think about the times that developers have wanted to put entrances to their properties on busy streets, near corners where things would be unsafe. I reflect on times in which developers have moved ahead and not put in adequate accessibility units.

Maybe I'll use one example of the dialogue between developers and communities. I do want to preface this, that not all developers are bad or not upfront with a community. There are many good developers. We need good developers. They are part of the solutions to housing. They are part of the solutions for growing our communities and our economy.

I'll reflect back to one developer who came in and wanted double the density on a piece of land. I was sitting at the council table with seven other councillors who didn't have quite the experience in the building industry as I do. It was sort of incumbent on me to challenge the developer on why he needed 12 units on this piece of land in this residential neighbourhood instead of six. His comeback was, well, the project can't go forward, the economics just don't work, they just don't work.

I challenged him on that, 12 units versus six. It was a \$120,000 piece of land, or something to that effect - this was up in the north. I said, the cost of the land per unit is the equivalent of about two months' rent and you are saying that this is not economically viable without a doubling of the density?

He said, absolutely it will kill the project if I don't get the doubling of the permitted density in this residential-zoned area.

The council voted seven to one to reject his proposal. The developer walked out of that Chamber. Moments after telling us that the project would be dead if we didn't give him the 12 units, he walked into the planning office around the corner and put in a new application for six units. This is where, if you do not have laws, abuse can happen.

Let's try and think about how this committee is going to work. I don't know how many planning applications HRM gets. Who is going to get through the public front door and work with the laws and the council, and who gets to go through the back door and move to this commission? Who is going to decide that? What is the process to go in the back door and ignore the laws and the wishes and the vision of the community, and who goes through the public front door and works in good faith with the community?

That's very concerning. I can't see how that - that is not transparent, and I don't think it will stand the sniff test by the public, because I don't think every development is going to go through the back door.

I explained what was going on to a businessman in my community. Businessmen want an even playing field. His reaction to this was, whoa, that just leaves things wide open for corruption. Those were his words, not mine.

We've created a closed-door back room in this legislation. I'm actually very concerned for the minister, because even if everything is aboveboard and this is a good project, it goes through this back door, it goes into this closed door and comes out, somebody is not going to like that project. Whether everything was aboveboard and honest, because it is behind closed doors, the minister is now open for accusations. That's a very precarious place to be as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

This bill now puts that minister really in the sights of people who will be unhappy with the decisions that are going to be made. There could be some pretty ugly accusations about what's going on behind those closed doors. This is the biggest intrusion on municipal government, on our communities, on our elected officials at the municipal level. I said this was a terrible bill. It remains a terrible bill, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I just have a few comments. I would like to speak to this housing bill. This morning I had an opportunity to actually listen in and participate in an affordable housing summit, listening to experts from across the country about the housing crisis. Certainly, it just emphasized that we are not in a unique situation here in Nova Scotia. What this housing summit emphasized is that Canada as a country has a fewer number of homes per capita than all G7 countries. We have a shortage of housing across our whole country.

The question is why. Why have investors not been investing in housing? Why have our developers and contractors not kept up based on our population growth? Really, getting down into the weeds and asking why we are in this situation will help us define the best solutions. We've heard our Premier, who is a chartered accountant, talk a lot about supply and demand, and they emphasized that this morning. It comes down to a very simplified question of the number of homes versus the number of people equals a certain number of houses and homes that you need, and then how do you determine that.

I'm wondering if his department has looked at that - how many people do we have here, how many homes do we need based on that, and what is the deficit, and then creating an actual plan to make sure that we can build that number of homes, or retrofit or renovate homes to get to that number. I'm wondering if we actually have that number.

As the member for Cumberland North, the main message that I want to share is that I was a little disappointed that it seems like a lot of the legislation coming out in this session for housing is very much targeted at HRM. We have a need for increased housing in all of Nova Scotia and definitely in the area of Cumberland North. In fact, just this week we had another house fire, a private boarding house, where 20 people were displaced, and we had no place to put them. It's an issue, definitely, throughout all Nova Scotia. I just want to emphasize that we have a need for that kind of support in Cumberland North as well, and we're looking for solutions, not just for HRM.

Some of the things that I've been told - I'm going to share these with the minister - is that developers are looking for a streamlined process. We need to find a faster way for them to get approval, a way to expedite the approval process in order to increase supply. I do believe also we need to look for innovative ways, not just to increase rental properties but also home ownership.

If the minister has not already reached out and knows about the program that John Bragg has for Oxford Frozen Foods, it's a very innovative program, where his company supports home ownership and providing a down payment for their homes in return for a commitment of service to their company. Because of that, the town of Oxford is one of the only towns that had a population growth in Nova Scotia, and it was specifically because of his businesses' program for his employees. It's something that if we could even educate other businesses in the province to learn about it, and if they wanted to replicate John Bragg's program is an idea as well.

[3:30 p.m.]

The housing summit this morning focused on top priorities of the macro, looking at alignment of all government levels. I kept hearing that. That is one of the problems, that municipal, provincial, and federal governments are not aligned and not working together, and the more that we can have that we can get better results.

I certainly heard from some former HRM councillors here in this House the concerns that this bill is maybe not a collaborative effort with our HRM municipal government. If that is the case, then I think it's really important to mend those fences and to make sure that the mayor of HRM and that the city councillors, that there is a spirit of collaboration and working together.

On a more micro level, just making sure that the application process is a very practical approach, and that it's easy.

The last thing that I would mention, along that line, is we had a meeting in Cumberland on Monday with municipal leaders and other stakeholders, and we're planning a meeting on November 23rd with builders, contractors, as well as all levels of government. The minister is certainly welcome to come, and anyone from his housing department.

One of the things that we would like to be able to have is a housing coordinator for Cumberland so that if somebody's looking to invest says "okay, I'd like to help meet this supply demand. I'd like to get involved in real estate or to build. How do I do that?" We'd like to have a coordinator, a housing coordinator, for Cumberland County. I think the best place for that person to work would be through our REN, which is the Cumberland Business Connector. It makes sense.

We have three municipal governments in Cumberland County: the Town of Oxford, County of Cumberland, and the Town of Amherst, but our REN envelops all three of those three municipalities, and would be a great place to have a housing coordinator, I believe. We would love to have the support of the province, maybe in either funding or in providing an employee as a housing coordinator so that we can look for solutions in Cumberland.

I appreciate the efforts to help growth here in HRM with housing supply, but we need it, also, in Cumberland North and throughout all of rural Nova Scotia.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleagues for their comments.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to stand here to close third reading on the Act to Establish an Executive Panel on Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality. We all know there is a housing crisis across the province. It is an issue in my own constituency. I'm sure nearly all of the members of the Legislature would tell me it's an issue in their constituencies as well.

I think we can all understand that the issue is most extreme in our province's largest city. The Halifax Regional Municipality is home to nearly 450,000 people. Last year, more than 9,000 moved into the HRM. All of those people need a place to live, and no matter what type of home they need - an affordable apartment, an urban townhouse, or a single-family home - we know housing is in short supply. This is not a problem that we have experienced in our lifetimes, and no matter how many cranes we see in HRM, no matter how many projects get approved, that demand still continues to grow.

The Halifax Regional Municipality has worked hard to make the city a great place to live. I'd like to compliment Mayor Savage, council, and the hard-working municipal staff on their vision and the work they put in to make this city such an appealing place to work, make a home and a life.

I think the pandemic has caused a lot of people to think about what matters most in their lives, and it made a move to Nova Scotia both possible and appealing. The success of Dr. Strang and Public Health has not gone unnoticed.

Now we feel that pressure that comes with success. HRM has worked hard to approve more housing projects, but we know the demand is great and there are a number of hurdles to clear in order to get more homes and apartments built. Not all are HRM's problems to fix, many are for the province to solve. That's the reason for this bill, Mr. Speaker.

Our goal for the panel is simple: to quickly increase housing supply so more residents of HRM have a safe, affordable place to call home. In order to do that we need to increase the overall housing supply, as well as the amount of affordable housing.

The panel puts the province at the table with HRM to discuss large-scale residential projects, figure out what the hurdles are and overcome them together. The panel can make recommendations about improving policies, either to the province or at HRM, to develop more housing quickly. It can investigate factors impacting housing supply. That includes the availability of land, skilled labour shortages and any other issues.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note this panel will only last three years from the date that the Act comes into force. That date is written into the legislation.

HRM has pointed out several times that housing is a provincial issue. That is very true. We need to be at the table, working with HRM and municipalities across the province to create more housing. It's possible that when the panel begins to delve into the specifics of a particular project, they may find issues that the province is best positioned to solve. Skilled labour shortages might be one, for example.

This panel means we will be there at the table so that HRM can ask us for solutions quickly and vice versa. Once the panel is established, either the panel or HRM can ask me, as minister, to declare an area of the municipality to be a special planning area. This would give me, as minister, additional planning and approval authority. That's something that would only be done upon request, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that HRM has been working hard to issue more development approvals and support more housing. They have approved their Centre Plan dealing with the urban core. I've heard good things and I'm looking forward to my briefings on that. The HRM, its mayor and council and its staff has worked hard on a vision they want to achieve. We appreciate that and respect it, but we also know, as they do, that the need is urgent.

HRM is growing fast, faster than we've experienced before. It's important that we make sure we are working together to avoid the mistakes we've seen in other large

Canadian cities as they grow. That's the long-term view. In the short term, we need to increase the supply of housing and help those who can't find a home they can afford.

This isn't the only thing our government is doing to support housing, Mr. Speaker. We passed inclusionary zoning legislation, we are in the process of approving affordable housing agreements, and we're now giving out nearly 4,500 rent supplements to help Nova Scotians afford their rent every month.

There's lots of work being done and I'd like to thank the Premier for leading the action-oriented government that is focussed on solutions. This bill is part of an extensive plan, and it couldn't have been done without his leadership. This panel is just one part of the solution to increase overall supply of housing so more people can enjoy the experience of living in this city.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 63.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 62.

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I move that Bill No. 62, the Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act, IRRICA, be read for a third time.

I do have a few comments, but I'm going to follow suit as my colleague. I look forward to comments from my colleagues opposite, and we'll go from there.

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

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I thank the minister for introducing Bill No. 62. I'll be brief. I just have a few observations before we proceed. The minister's department has done hard work on this, and I want to make sure that we get things right.

In second reading, the minister questioned how many people actually read the bills, but when it comes to the Residential Tenancies Act, quite a few people do read it. It's like the Labour Standards Code in that it's a place people turn to, to figure out their rights when they're in a tough situation.

I will give the minister that not all tenants have copies of the Residential Tenancies Act in their homes, but for those of us in our offices, those individuals who advocate and definitely those who are developers and landlords, it is a document that they access quite regularly. It's like the Labour Standards Code in that it's a place people turn to, to figure out their rights in a tough situation. If a landlord or tenant does something that someone feels is wrong, people read the Act to figure out what their rights and obligations are.

That being said, I wish that this rent cap increase was actually in that Residential Tenancies Act. The Residential Tenancies Program has plain English. Those are guides that are really good for others. Since this is now separate, I'm hopeful that the minister will be providing the gist of this interim cap in plain English form so that it doesn't just get logged down as jargon for those who will really be the most vulnerable and will need to know that this is something that is out there and applies to them.

In second reading - and this is not going to surprise the minister - the minister said that the reason they were enacting this as a stand-alone bill was because it's a bit straightforward and easy to amend if it ever needed to be amended, and I can table that comment. I hope that's not going to be the case. If it's a two-year rent cap, there shouldn't be any reason to amend it. Landlords and tenants usually aren't looking for special treatment from the government. They just want to know what the rules are. The minister has alluded to this. We have to talk about this.

The Residential Tenancies Act in particular is a piece of legislation that tries to find balance and tries to find a way to honour both parties that are involved. I hope the minister will commit to not changing the Act, considering it's already set to expire at the end of 2023, which, whether we want to admit it or not, is not far down the road.

Mr. Speaker, we are supporting this bill, but I must ask the minister to address the important issues that I've raised today. The housing file is huge, and there's a lot of hard work involved. Once again, I'm going to thank the department and give a shout-out to "Mean Dean" Johnston and his keen team of residential tenancy policy-making machines - okay, that was bad. Anyway, Dean Johnston, you're a rock star. I thank you, and I thank the minister and look forward to hearing his final remarks.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SUZY HANSEN: I have a lot to say, and I'm going to say it. It shouldn't come as any surprise to any of the members of this House that the NDP caucus supports rent control. Our caucus tabled a bill to re-establish permanent rent control in Nova Scotia in 2017. We

have tabled it in every session since then, and we're glad to see that this is going to be a two-year rent cap on the table there. We do appreciate seeing that.

There are 122,645 households that rent in Nova Scotia. According to the Canadian Rental Housing Index, Nova Scotia's rental market ranks as the most unhealthy rental market in Atlantic Canada. In 2020, Halifax had the worst vacancy rate of any major city in Canada, 1.7 per cent. Compare that to 3.4 per cent in Toronto and 3.3 per cent in Montreal. The average price of a two-bedroom apartment in Halifax has increased 43 per cent in the last five years, and minimum wage has only gone up 15 per cent, and I'll table that.

The recently-released CCPA report, which calculated the living wage for different areas of the province, found that shelter was the most expensive item on household budgets, eating up about 30 per cent of income. I'll table that. Almost 70 per cent of people accessing food banks in Nova Scotia are renters.

[3:45 p.m.]

A media article from August 29, 2021, summarized the positions the three parties had on rent control. I spoke of this before in the most recent election. The article says:

“The NDP promised to ‘implement permanent rent control to stabilize and make predictable people’s monthly rent.’

“The Liberals, as is their wont, waffled, with the government initially seeming determined to stick to its announced intent to end the temporary 2% COVID rent cap once the province reached Phase 5 of its re-opening plan but then, in the last desperate days of the campaign . . . suggesting it might keep rent control for ‘a few years’ until the market stabilized.

“Like the NDP, the Progressive Conservatives were consistent - but consistently ‘no’ on rent control.”

But here we are with the PC bill that is based on a Liberal government's policy. Sadly, neither does what is necessary to address the current situation. Fun fact: There's already a rent control Act in Nova Scotia. It's called the Rent Review Act. But the Liberals scrapped it in 1993 through an Order in Council, so they were able to avoid any debate in the Legislature. At that time, vacancy rates were 7.1 per cent on the peninsula and 12 per cent in Dartmouth.

Guy Brown, who was a Liberal Minister, said people didn't need the protection then, but he made it clear that if the situation changed, he would be the first to reactivate rent control. However, in eight years, the Liberal Government did little to increase the

number of affordable housing units, vacancy rates dropped to 1.7 per cent, and the Liberals didn't reactivate rent control.

In fact, in March 2020, we asked the then-Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services why the government was refusing to re-establish rent control at a time when vacancy rates were so low and so many tenants were getting pushed out of housing by rent increases of hundreds of dollars. The minister said, "We have looked at rent control within the department and we see the studies that show that it does not prove to be effective." I'll table these.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard similar lines from both the current and former ministers responsible for the Residential Tenancies Act, and I would respond, doesn't work for who? Rent control certainly worked in Nova Scotia for many years prior to 1993. It certainly works for the hundreds of renters who have signed petitions and called on the government to maintain the rent cap. It seems to work well enough for people in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and P.E.I.

Maybe my colleagues' understanding of rent control is a bit like the grasp on economic policy and it hasn't really caught up to the current reality. I will happily table some reading on the subject that I encourage all the members to have a look at: *Why Rent Control Works; Rent control can help tenants and get new units built; Dear Business School Professors: You're Wrong, Rent Control Works; An Analysis of Manitoba's Rent Regulation Program and the Impact on the Rental Housing Market.*

The current reality of low vacancy rates, low wages, and rapidly rising rents requires permanent rent control. Our bill, which we have put forward over and over and over again, establishes a system that give tenants and landlords predictability around rental increases. Unlike the bill in front of us, our rent control legislation tied allowable annual rent increases to a measure, like the Consumer Price Index, unless Cabinet finds a lower limit is reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the bill in front of us, our rent control legislation allows landlords to apply to make additional increases for renovations, added services, or exceptional cost increases, something landlords asked for during Law Amendments Committee.

Maybe the most important difference between the bill we are discussing and the bill our caucus has previously put forward is that our bill set the previous tenant's rent as the base for increases. The PCs, like the Liberals before them, have tied the rent cap to the individual living in the apartment and not the unit itself. This means that when a new person moves into an apartment, all bets are off. The rent can be reset to whatever the landlord wants without restrictions. For large landlords like Killam, this means that the rent cap we're debating here today won't have an impact on about 30 per cent of their thousands of rental units.

It was just reported today that Killam has reported a net income of \$46.6 million in the third quarter. That's \$9 million higher than the company's net income from the same quarter last year, and yet all this moaning and groaning about the negative impact of rent control. Wow. Just makes me cry.

Mr. Speaker, we came to this House last night with amendments to strengthen this bill because we know how important it is. We were disappointed that the government rejected those amendments.

Our caucus will support this bill because so many people are depending on it, and we will continue to advocate on behalf of the people we represent to make sure that no one is forced out of their home because of rent increases.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak to this bill and register the ways in which our caucus will continue to urge the government to go further. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to stand and make a few comments about this bill. It's a challenging place that we find ourselves in. It does come back down to not having enough housing supply. I recognize that the government is in a challenging place.

In Cumberland North I'm hearing from both tenants and landlords. Tenants are so happy that the government has put this legislation forward to protect them from increasing costs that many of them can't afford; however, landlords are upset as the cap will potentially cause them financial stress. I have some people happy and some people very upset.

The landlords want government to properly consult them. They have asked me to share that with the government - to do proper consultation. With skyrocketing expenses, a 2 per cent rent cap is unsustainable for Nova Scotian landlords.

That may result in landlords selling their rental units, which potentially could be converted into single-family homes, causing current renters to vacate the unit and find a new place to live in a rental market that already has a 1 per cent vacancy rate. So potentially the rent cap could worsen our current housing crisis.

We did hear from a lot of landlords at the Law Amendments Committee who shared similar concerns as the landlords I've been hearing from in Cumberland North. Although we heard from a member of the NDP caucus about the large rental companies like Killam, in Cumberland North we have a lot of small landlords who have one unit to three or four.

I'll share the story of one landlord who called me not too long ago. He's a landlord who moved here from Syria about six years ago. He has been able to start a business; he's an entrepreneur. He thought that if he bought a rental unit, that would help him to potentially plan for his retirement.

His rental has three units in it. He contacted me because some of the tenants were not able to pay their rent. He called me to ask what can be done. We put him touch with the Residential Tenancies Board - and we all know in this House the challenges with that.

We're the only province in the whole country that has 15 days, or more, before a landlord can even give notice, so we have huge delays in getting the Residential Tenancies Board to address the concerns not only of landlords, but of tenants as well. That has led to a lot of challenges.

This landlord - this Syrian immigrant - who came here said he was just trying to earn a living and you as a government can't enforce that somebody pay a bill. He was very frustrated. Meanwhile, the tenant is in a situation where they're on a fixed income and they can't afford to buy groceries and pay rent.

I share that example because we have a lot of empathy for our tenants. I think it's also important to recognize that a lot of our landlords are also struggling.

As a former businesswoman, I can't help but see things through the eyes of running a business and owning a property. The main expenses of a building are mortgage, property taxes, insurance, and maintenance costs. Most of those are fixed expenses. The one variable expense is maintenance. At the end of the day, if there's no profit left, maintenance - the variable cost - is often the one thing that gets left out.

Another fact that landlords have to deal with as a business owner is if they're not able to be profitable, there's always the risk of the bank recalling their loan and they may lose that property.

I do have sympathy - I do have empathy for small business owners who are landlords who are just trying to keep their business afloat. The fact is the rent cap is going to place challenges on them. I do support this bill, but I also ask government to work with our landlords to try to find solutions so that they can also be viable. Most of their expenses you can't control, like electricity rates, utility rates, the insurance. We all heard of cases where insurance rates have gone up astronomically. With the 2 per cent rent cap, it's going to further put more pressures on the building owner.

One thing that government can control is property taxes. I am asking the government to consider that as one of the possible solutions. That as long as you have this 2 per cent rent cap on, one of the things you can go back to our landlords in this province, the businesses that are trying to stay afloat - and again, I'm not talking about the Killams,

I'm talking about the small business owners that I know of and landlords in Cumberland North - is to be able to offer them either holding the property taxes so there are zero increases in their property taxes as long as this rent cap is on, or at least holding it to ensure that it doesn't increase more than 2 per cent.

That is one thing, through the Property Valuation Services Corporation and working with our municipal governments, we do have control over. That is how much we're charging for property taxes here in this province.

I also know that we have a responsibility as government to make sure that people who are struggling, people who are vulnerable, and people who are on fixed income are protected. For that reason, I do support this bill.

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

GARY BURRILL: I'm glad to speak to Bill No. 62, this bill to implement an interim residential rental increase cap.

I understand that the choice of words is very deliberate in this title: interim, yes, until the end of 2023. There's no synonym for not permanent, for sure, that's gone unused in the government's discourse about this legislation. We've been told how it's temporary, it's a stopgap, it's an interim measure, and so on. That's clear in the title. Less clear are the words "rent cap."

The minister in his comments on second reading on this bill was adamant that a rent cap is not the same thing as rent control. This does not in my view actually make sense. The definition of rent control is that which controls rent. Rent cap is a control of rent, and therefore it is exactly a form of rent control. Perhaps it's not the most comprehensive, thorough form of rent control, perhaps it's not the broadest form of rent control, but it is a mechanism that controls rent, nevertheless. Hence a form of rent control.

What we have in front of us is a bill for temporary rent control, pure and simple. I find that we're in the odd situation of having a government kind of minimizing the value of its own legislation, almost shrinking a little bit back from or using language to minimize or disavow or make lesser the significance of this important bill.

I don't think there's anything that should be minimized or made smaller about this legislation. The government, in extending temporary rent control from February 2022 to December 2023, is simply doing a very important thing, which is going to make life a lot more tenable for an awful lot of people.

I remember in November 2020, the Liberal Minister at the time of the implementation of the first temporary rent control speaking in the same way. How on the day that the first temporary rent control was instituted, how he spoke about how the then-

government also didn't believe in rent control. He spoke about how he didn't believe in rent control even as he was bringing in the measure.

[4:15 p.m.]

I think the government ought to stand up straight here and be very proud of what it is accomplishing with this legislation. I just think back to the situation that we were in before the original temporary rent control was brought in 11 months ago. For months and months there had been, across the province, a mounting crescendo of misery from people about sudden, dramatic, unsubstantiated rent increases that they couldn't afford, which were going to force them to have to leave places where they and their families had made their homes, oftentimes for decades.

This crescendo of misery filled inboxes of MLAs. It filled the space of so many conversations around the province. It affected the circle of so many people's families and so many people's friends and then, on November 25, 2020, with the announcement of the first temporary rent control, it was as though, all of a sudden, a hundred pounds were taken off the shoulders of thousands of people across the province. It was almost palpable, as though the whole province had had this enormous weight of concern and trepidation taken off their shoulders.

That same crescendo had begun again to build in recent months, particularly as in recent months people were receiving notices from their landlords of the same type of sudden, dramatic, unsubstantiated rent increases to take effect the beginning of the first month following the expiry of rent control, which at that time was set to be in February, right in the dead of winter. So, again, an enormous sigh of relief went up across the province when the government announced on October 20th that they would be instituting an extension of temporary rent control for 22 more months.

I think that the government is doing a lot of good here. I think the government here has made a positive decision and that it ought not to shrink or minimize in any way how much it means for people across the province to be able to look and see that they are going to have 22 more months of temporary rent control.

I also think it is a good thing, a useful thing, for this extension of temporary rent control - unlike the original instituting of temporary rent control - I think it is a good thing that this instituting of temporary rent control is being brought forward in an actual piece of legislation because this wasn't the case with temporary rent control one last year. Legislation has the advantage that it is a harder thing to change without being out in the open.

This was not the case with the original rent control order and this led, in fact - the fact that the original rent control order was not a piece of legislation and therefore could operate behind closed doors - this led to an unfortunate result with the original rent control

system. I will just speak about that for a few moments. When the original temporary rent control order was issued on November 25, 2020, retroactive to September, it provided for a particular form of rent control. The form of rent control it provided for is one that is often known as rent control by unit, which means, simply, that the rent is subject to the cap regardless of how often the house or the apartment changes tenants.

It was not discovered, though, until seven months later - and this was only through a journalist's investigative diligence - that two days after the implementation of the original rent control order, that order was altered so that the temporary rent control contained in that original rent control order became to be in a different form: the form of rent control that is often known not as rent control by unit but rent control by tenant, which means that the rent cap would not apply to the next tenant once the previous tenant moved.

Now, obviously rent control by tenant is a form of rent control that is much more advantageous to landlords than is rent control by unit. Yet this change from a form of rent control more advantageous to tenants to a form of rent control more advantageous to landlords, this change was made just a few days after the order was originally implemented, behind closed doors, with no more public notification than the legalistic minimum required of publication in the government's *Gazette*. One is left to imagine the pressures brought to bear on the Liberal government to effectively, behind closed doors, make that particular significant and not very helpful change.

To be clear, the form of rent control provided in this present bill is also, I'm sorry to say, the form of rent control that is more advantageous to landlords, the form of rent control known as rent control by tenant, and this is one of the things that we have - in the amending process in Committee of the Whole - been in the NDP attempting to change in this legislation - unfortunately unsuccessfully. However, all that aside, I think it is a good thing, a positive thing, to have the matter out in the open in legislation as it is here in this present case.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do want to respond briefly to a couple of comments the minister made in his remarks on second reading of the bill, in which the minister referred to a short article that I had submitted to *The Chronicle Herald* that day, about the achievement of temporary rent control in the bill and to which the minister expressed disagreement with what he saw as my taking credit for the NDP. I think those were the exact words, or very, very close, about this legislation. Anyway, I'll table the Hansard of those remarks.

I think this was and is a misinterpretation of what I had written, on the minister's part. What I said in that piece was that the extension of temporary rent control is an enormous victory for all those tenants, community organizations, and housing advocates across the province who have raised their voices for rent control in Nova Scotia. I don't think that that can reasonably be denied.

The government was adamantly, vociferously, repeatedly, opposed to rent control in any form. The Premier had been clear beyond any misinterpretation about this many, many times, particularly in July and August in the course of the election. The Throne Speech not only made no mention of this rent control legislation, it didn't even touch on the subject of housing at all, except in the one mention, indirect way. Yet today, just a couple of weeks later, we have this bill before us. Why? I think it is a reasonable conclusion to draw that the government changed its mind and that it decided to do what it had said it would not do in response to a public outcry so deep and great that it couldn't be denied.

Yes, our party is very proud to have been part of that outcry. Our party is very proud to have been a voice of that outcry in this House. Yes, it is true that our MLAs have been proud to speak and march and be part of the many rallies, many protests, many demonstrations for rent control in Nova Scotia.

Yes, when social movements and legislative voices work together the outcome can be powerful and resonant. The name of that outcome, Mr. Speaker, is "democracy." So today we in the NDP celebrate all those people who have attended these demonstrations; we celebrate all those people who have contacted their politicians about unfair increases in their rent; and we celebrate all those people who have had the courage to come forward and speak publicly about how market pressures were poised to force them out of their homes.

We say to all those people, congratulations, this has been a very important battle for a lot of people which you and what you have done together have won. So, I want to offer those words of clarification in response to what the minister said about that piece at second reading.

To go back to the image of having won a battle, of course yes, that battle is won, but certainly not the war. What we actually continue to need in Nova Scotia beyond the temporary rent control extension that is provided by this legislation is permanent rent control as it is provided for by another bill, the Rental Fairness and Affordability Act, which we in the NDP have now before this House.

The advantages of permanent rent control over temporary rent control are many. It should be noted that this is also true for landlords, as well as for tenants. Landlords often make the quite reasonable criticism of the temporary rent cap - that it leaves them no means to recoup expenses related to maintenance or investment. That is a reasonable concern on landlords' part, but this is not true of a system of permanent rent control.

When you have permanent rent control that is a system that provides, as our legislation for permanent rent control, provides for landlords to be able to demonstrate their case for exceptions to the rent cap. This is a provision of the NDP's Rental Fairness Act, and it was also a provision of the rent control system under which we, in Nova Scotia,

operated for many years. There is no such provision in the government's present temporary rent cap bill.

Comprehensive permanent rent control is simply, in my judgment, more respectful than a temporary rent cap to the people of Nova Scotia because the people of Nova Scotia deserve the same kinds of statutory protections from dramatic, unsubstantiated rent increases as are provided by their provincial government to a majority of Canadians today.

Prior to the November 2020 implementation of the first temporary rent control when there was, as I have said, that steady crescendo of fearful people coming forward with notices for increases of hundreds and hundreds of dollars. Prior to that, the most common thing that people who would visit my own constituency office on Quinpool Road with questions about astronomical, sudden rent increases, the most common thing people would ask when they would bring a copy of that rent increase demand or email or order from the landlord and present it to me as their MLA, the most common thing they would say was, they can't do that, can they?

The answer was that they can't do it if you live in British Columbia, they can't do it if you live in Manitoba or Ontario, Quebec or P.E.I., but they could at that time do it in Nova Scotia because we were living in the absence of a system of rent control.

It is not too much to ask, in my judgment, that the statutory protections that are available to a majority of Canadians should be available also to the people of Nova Scotia.

Permanent rent control, contrary to the position that the government often puts forward, doesn't restrict or impede or inhibit in any way the development of housing supply. Permanent rent control has clearly not restricted development in areas where it is implemented like Toronto. It hasn't restricted development in areas where it is the system like Vancouver.

On the contrary, a major analysis of this question under the title *An Analysis of Manitoba's Rent Regulation Program and the Impact on the Rental Housing Market* found that, "well-designed rent regulations can improve the economic security of tenants and, at the same time, have a beneficial effect on the market's efficiency."

At a minimum, communities and cities that people can afford to live in tend to have the kind of vibrancy and along with the vibrancy, markets, that ultimately are attractive to investment.

The permanent rent control also is the superior system to temporary rent control in that it addresses, and it helps to balance out the often quite terrible imbalance of power that can be the case between landlords and tenants, when the situation is being left entirely just to the vagaries of an unregulated market.

According to the Canadian Rental Housing Index, Nova Scotia's is the unhealthiest rental market in the Atlantic Region. This is made evident in the fact that in the last full calendar year Halifax had the worst vacancy rate of any major city in Canada and it was also made evident in the fact that rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the city went up 20 per cent just over the last year alone.

[4:15 pm.]

We routinely, as a society, regulate the price of things like, let us say, power, because we know that market conditions are not such as will provide balance. That is why in the jurisdictions in which a majority of Canadians live, they do the same thing. As part of the permanent, statutory, legislative system and landscape, they regulate increases that people receive in their rent.

I think the government needs to get over the idea that permanent rent control is somehow beyond the pale of their outlook. Permanent rent control is the system we operated under in Nova Scotia for many years. Under both Conservative and Liberal governments, it operated more or less as it does today across Canada.

I used to do advocacy work in the 1970s with an organization called the Halifax Coalition for Full Employment. Most of our work was in the area of unemployment insurance, as it used to be called, but from time to time, it would touch on residential tenancies issues, so I had a little familiarity with these kinds of cases.

The system was so simple. When a rent increase was put forward and it exceeded that year's designated limit, the landlord would be requested by the Residential Tenancies, when it was contested, to bring forward the receipts and the invoices from the extraordinary expenses that they thought gave them good cause for the cap to be exceeded. In cases where the receipts and invoices were there, the increase was allowed to stand. In cases where the receipts and invoices for the expenses were not there, the increase was not allowed to stand. It was pretty fair, and it was pretty simple.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, as we think about reasons why permanent rent control is a superior system to temporary rent control, we have our economy in Nova Scotia to think about. There is no road out of the economic contraction we have been experiencing in the wake of COVID-19 that does not include the recovery of consumer purchasing power in this province, where we have the lowest median income in the country. Our situation today is that one fifth of the people who pay rent in Nova Scotia pay 50 per cent or more of their income for their shelter. This is untenable.

It's untenable for them, it's untenable for their families, it's untenable for their communities, and it is untenable for the economic health of our province. Permanent rent control would mean that a significantly greater number of our people would have

something left over past rent day with which they would be able to buy some of the goods and some of the services that the businesses of Nova Scotia have to sell.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, what we have to think about is: What is most important? What we have to think about is, who are the people who are most centrally important within our vision? Investment and markets and development are certainly important things when we talk about these questions, but they're not the most important things. They're not the thing that we need to have most centrally within our vision.

The most important thing and the thing we need to have most centrally in our vision is the household, the person, the family, for whom the question of whether or not there's going to be enough is never very far from the day's agenda. They are juggling rent, juggling payments, juggling groceries, and juggling notices coming home from school for money for this and money for that. They are often pulling uphill and not rarely very tired, and rent control might not be the solution for everything, but it is a real, tangible, and practical solid help.

This temporary rent control legislation will make real, practical difference in a lot of people's lives. It will lighten thousands of people's loads. The government is doing something here that, although it is incomplete, is very worthy. This worthy bill has the support of the NDP.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Before I get to my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I do want to answer some of the questions.

Regarding the stand-alone bill, I just want to further clarify that the name of the bill in itself, in addition to it being a stand-alone bill, further indicates clearly that this is an interim measure that will be coming to an end on December 31st, 2023.

Regarding the education pieces, regarding whether it be the RTA that we've brought amendments forward this legislative session, whether it be the changes that we're making through this bill, as my colleague from Dartmouth North has brought forward during debate regarding the education pieces, this is ongoing work with the department. I can say that it will be communicated through guides, marketing materials, web pages, whatnot, that changes to the RTA and reflected in this piece of legislation will be included there.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, again, start by thanking the members for the debate. I'd say it'd be a fairly healthy one. Speaking of a healthy one, I want to make sure I'm standing up straight and have good posture after hearing the comments from the leader of the NDP.

This is an important bill, Mr. Speaker, an act that will impact more than 300,000 Nova Scotians, people living right across our province and that we proudly represent. I appreciated hearing the perspectives from the members opposite and listening to the issues that they brought forward. As I said before, we'll be bringing their feedback to my department.

I also want to thank those who appeared before Law Amendments Committee earlier this week to share their experiences, their suggestions regarding this piece of legislation. This takes time - to prepare a submission, to present to the committee - and for that, I'm grateful. I watched Law Amendments Committee when our bill was being discussed. I watched it along with my deputy minister, the associate deputy minister, our executive director of Business and Consumer Services, senior residential tenancy officials. All of us wanted and needed to hear first-hand from Nova Scotians what was being said about IRRICA.

Introducing Bill No. 62 as we did, Mr. Speaker, was necessary. We recognize that we are in the midst of a housing crisis and some of our most vulnerable citizens - our friends, our families - are at risk of facing significant rent increases. Everyone in this Chamber is well aware of the affordable housing challenges in our province that we are currently facing. It has been brought up many times in this Legislature. Members have heard stories in the media and have likely heard stories close to home in our very own constituencies.

Housing prices are on the rise, and Nova Scotia tenants are struggling to keep up. We've heard the stories of tenants facing large rental increases - so big, Mr. Speaker, they would not be able to continue to afford living where they are. No one deserves to go through that if we can prevent it.

The temporary rent cap put into place during the state of emergency will eventually come to an end, and our most vulnerable are worried about how they will afford housing when it does. Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis has required us to take urgent action - immediate action - to protect our citizens. We know the Affordable Housing Commission has recommended not extending the current cap, but the situation has not improved since it was put in place. There is an immediate need for this protection to bridge the gap until we can get to a place with more availability, which will lead to more affordability.

Bill No. 62 will provide our most vulnerable with peace of mind, Mr. Speaker. They will be protected. The Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Bill will extend the 2 per cent cap for another two years. It will provide protection for tenants as we get to work fixing the real problem, the affordable housing supply. The new rent cap will apply once the current ministerial directive expires, so there is no gap in protection.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear: this is not a long-term solution. The rent cap is an interim solution. This is not rental control; it is a rent cap. The 2 per cent rent cap is an interim measure to get us to a place where there is more housing supply.

We look forward to continuing conversations with both landlords and tenants as we continue our work to modernizing the Residential Tenancies Act. Their input will help bring their individual challenges to the table and allow us to work with them to address these challenges as we modernize the Act. We will be bringing more changes to the Residential Tenancies Act in the future. As I've noted before, any changes we make will have impacts on all parties, so we will take the time to get it right and have the necessary conversations with our stakeholders.

The interim rent cap is only part of our government's overall efforts to address the affordable housing situation. In the last couple of weeks, we have announced our plan, *A Healthy Nova Scotia: Solutions for Housing and Homelessness*, along with a number of amendments and initiatives aimed at addressing this situation. We are committed to tackling the affordable housing challenges our province is facing and we are taking action. Again, for affordability to improve, availability must improve.

With that, I conclude my remarks and move to close debate on Bill No. 62.
(Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 62.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 61.

Bill No. 61 - Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 61 be read for a third time and do pass. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues and will offer comments once they are finished.

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

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, I know I expressed concern before, and I hope that the minister will respond to my concerns with regard to the Crown corporation being set up to handle this transportation. I understand that all the Crown corporations are being reviewed. We had the Tourism Nova Scotia one dissolved and my concerns are around the expenses of creating a Crown corporation. They typically have a CEO who is well remunerated and at least five hired staff.

I just wondered if there was any consideration to it just being a group because we just passed a housing group and there was no need to create a Crown corporation for that, but I just wonder why another Crown corporation. Crown corporations tend to have assets but this one would not. The only identified people that they would be working with are federal Crown corporations that have their own assets. I am trying to get an understanding of what exactly this group will be tasked with.

[4:30 p.m.]

I do recall and I would like to receive confirmation from the minister that she stated that they will look at the Integrated Mobility Plan and use it going forward. HRM conducted 22 public meetings in creating the Integrated Mobility Plan and countless additional meetings with interested groups, including the provincial government. Nothing in it will come as a surprise to this government or the provincial engineers in transportation.

The IMP, as it is affectionately known, is the regional transportation plan for the Halifax region. Why replace it with a rebranded master plan that will add significant cost to the taxpayer?

To my colleague's comments earlier that this is the greatest intrusion in municipal politics, I want to remain optimistic. He was actually quoting a former colleague of mine, Councillor Sam Austin.

To give this House an idea of how concerned people are - maybe this government's not hearing these concerns, but we are - they are also aware that the Government of Ontario under Doug Ford did exactly this to Toronto. I'm hoping that that's not what the case is here. This government's intentions are not known, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping that some of these intentions are responded to in the response from the minister.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to this bill. Just this morning, I was sitting at the Dartmouth Ferry Terminal waiting for my ferry. My colleague for Dartmouth South and I had a beautiful commute across a sparkling harbour this morning.

While I was waiting for the ferry, I was just watching the little TV that's in the ferry terminal. There was this great explanation of the Integrated Mobility Plan that I had never seen before, actually. I know about the Integrated Mobility Plan, but it was fun to watch, and it was really clear and accessible.

I was lamenting - I wasn't lamenting the loss of the Integrated Mobility Plan, but I was thinking about how we would be debating this bill today and hoping beyond hope that this bill will not mean an end to that excellently-thought-out plan. I know the minister has talked about collaboration with the HRM on this. I just want to reiterate that it's so important.

The other thing that I want to say before I read my prepared remarks, Mr. Speaker, is that in Dartmouth North on Wyse Road, which is sort of the main drag through Dartmouth North coming off the bridge - it's where my office is and it's where the grocery stores are, Sobeys and No Frills - what else can I say about it? Genji Sushi is there. There's all kinds of good stuff on Wyse Road.

They've just put in dedicated bike lanes. That means separated bike lanes that have the concrete barrier to the rest of the street, the green crosswalks, and a whole bunch of signage and painting on the pavement. I have to tell you that it's really changed the look of the street. It's changed the feel of the street. It's very exciting.

As I mentioned in the House one other day, I rode my bike through those dedicated bike lanes - that was before they even got the concrete barriers, so I can't wait to do that. That'll be fun.

This is the kind of stuff that we need to see all over the province as we move toward a cleaner planet and cleaner environment and as we move toward the goals of the new Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Bill that we will be passing later today. I just want to register those two thoughts before I begin.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to restate some of the concerns that our caucus raised during the Committee of the Whole House on Bills. As I said at that time, I'm concerned that in its haste, the government has missed some very important details in the framing of the agency, which I believe has the potential to do excellent and important work.

We were disappointed when the government voted down our amendments, which would have done a few important things. The bill asks the agency to craft a plan that ensures a regional approach to transportation consistent with the municipality's growth and development.

Our amendments would have added, number one, climate change. Transportation has a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions. I think we can all agree on that.

Carefully planning our regional transportation system is an opportunity to make a big impact here.

I hope that as we move through the next four years together in this House, all of the bills that we debate will take climate change into consideration, and how we make the bills that we pass in the next four years interact with the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Bill that we will be passing later, as I already mentioned. We can no longer pass legislation that doesn't have an eye to climate change, among other very important lenses, of course.

This is why the Ecology Action Centre has submitted to the consultations on the former Sustainable Development Goals Act the following goal: By 2030, 90 per cent of Nova Scotians shall have access to public or community transit or active transportation within 400 metres of their homes and destinations.

To confront the climate crisis, we simply must meet equity, accessibility, and emissions targets. We must provide alternatives to driving motorized vehicles and do this in order to increase independence for people who do not or cannot drive, improve population health and air quality, reduce emissions, and reduce the financial burden of driving. It's concerning and confusing that the bill does not mention climate change or emissions at all.

The second thing we proposed amendments about was accessibility. Our province has a goal of reaching an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. A regional transportation plan must consider accessibility in its widest possible definition. The Department of Public Works is committed to advancing the Access by Design 2030 framework which will develop standards in the following areas: built environment, education, employment, goods and services, information and communications, and transportation. It's concerning that accessibility isn't mentioned in the agency's framework.

The third amendment that we made a note of was including equity and diversity. The right and ability to move around easily is not available equitably to everyone. I certainly see this in my own community of Dartmouth North, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of people who live with disabilities, who use motorized assistance - yes, scooters, but there's a better name for them - to move around. Or they don't have access to those because they are hugely expensive and they take a long time to get when you are a client of DCS, so they simply don't leave their immediate community or sometimes even their apartment buildings. So, there are barriers of socio-economic status, geography, ability, and age.

We know there is much work to do to make sure that everyone moving around, getting to work, school, or the grocery store is able to get there equitably and equally. Building road infrastructure is definitely part of that and so is building accessible public transit and accessible active transit infrastructure.

We must also fund and support programs that make active transportation accessible. For example, municipal bike share programs, education programs and programs that connect low-income people with bicycles and helmets. The agency must consider these challenges along with a diverse range of perspectives if it is going to create a plan that is equitable and fair for all Nova Scotians.

I just wanted to make another point: This past Summer there were consultations in Dartmouth North to do with the Integrated Mobility Plan where they were planning some integrated bike paths to connect Wyse Road and the main part of Dartmouth North with the Burnside Greenway, which is the path that goes through Burnside and beyond. I think those consultations were done quite well and prolifically in the area, but it was important when we were talking about those bike lanes to remember that there are barriers even to active transportation.

So the cost of cycling, even though it is way cheaper than a car, is still expensive. The knowledge and ability to fix your own bike - I don't have that. My colleague from Halifax Citadel-Sable Island's son fixed my bike the other day when I got a flat tire. I should know how to fix my bike, but there are many people who don't know how.

Programs like Bike Again! at the Ecology Action Centre, or the program where the Ecology Action Centre was bringing around a mobile bicycle hub to different marginalized communities. These are excellent programs, and they will increase folks' ability to cycle or get around with active transportation and have confidence to do it.

Speaking of active transportation, that's the next amendment that we proposed. The bill asks the agency to conduct a comprehensive review of all modes of transportation associated with the municipality, including roads, bridges, highways, ferries, transit, rail, airports, and ports. I'm totally at a loss as to why active transit would not be listed in this list.

Our caucus was optimistic when the previous government renamed the former Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to Transportation and Active Transit. It sent a real signal. Now of course it's renamed the Department of Public Works. The previous name change, unfortunately, did not go hand in hand with an increase in funding - so don't get too excited about my compliments over there - for active transportation projects.

I suppose we will see what the approach of this new government is to supporting active transit, though currently I'm not overly optimistic. HRM and active transit advocates and organizations have been working hard to envision and build an active transit network in the region, in part through the work of plans like the aforementioned Integrated Mobility Plan, and an agency must build on that work.

All of these things will be key tools in fighting the climate crisis. I'm concerned that the government may not understand the importance of the addition of active transit, so I'd like to provide a little bit of context.

According to the 2016 census data in Halifax, of the people who commute to a usual place of work, 17,890 people identify that they walk or bicycle as their main mode of commuting. Across the entire province, 27,350 people report walking or biking to work as their main mode of transport. Unless the government believes that this is only a Halifax phenomenon, here are a few more figures. In CRBM, nine per cent of people have a main mode of commuting to work that is not driving. In Bridgewater, 12 per cent. In Amherst, 11 per cent. In Truro, 16 per cent.

I would suspect that these figures will increase in coming years, the pandemic and working from home notwithstanding. More and more people will choose active transportation modes as we build more infrastructure to support them. Research shows that the lack of infrastructure is the main barrier to choosing active transportation. People are quite literally afraid of being killed on their bicycles. I hear it all the time. I've experienced a couple of accidents, and it's not fun.

People also choose active transit because it is good for their health and good for the environment. Of course, there are many people who walk or bike because there's not another mode of transportation that they can afford. We have a duty to support people with networks and infrastructure for active transit, whether they choose this mode of transportation or require it.

A joint regional transportation agency that does not take active transit into account, its role in moving people around Halifax, will not be complete or successful. As has been discussed much in recent days in this House, transportation is a main driver of greenhouse gas emissions in Nova Scotia and is the one category of emissions that is not declining or expected soon to decline.

We urged the previous government, and now also the current government, to commit to building a provincewide, connected active transit network by 2030. Advocates have done much work on this idea, known as the Blue Route, with the view to improving tourism, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing employment and overall health. Building the Blue Route and other active transit infrastructure is an opportunity to create green jobs and could be seized upon in our economy recovery post-COVID-19.

Current active transit networks in HRM and beyond are fragmented and often disjointed, yielding incomplete paths and routes that end abruptly. The Blue Route aims to address this and I'm urging this government to commit to building it, together with partners and local governments and communities across the province.

Mr. Speaker, our caucus also put forward an amendment that would add needed transparency measures to this bill. This government has spoken about being more transparent, and when they were in Opposition they spoke about transparency and accountability an awful lot because it's important. I hope they would have considered changes to the bill that would a) require the agency's board to meet in public, as is the case with other important boards such as the Utility and Review Board; and b) require the agency to consult with the public in its development of a five-year plan. It seems essential that the public would have input to a regional transportation plan in order for it to be successful.

The agency will need to hear from a range of people and stakeholders from different sectors and backgrounds to understand barriers to accessibility and equitable transportation in order to craft a successful plan.

[4:45 p.m.]

In case you didn't get this from everything I've just said, I'm extremely disappointed that the government did not support these few simple yet essential additions to the bill. In registering those comments and disappointments, our caucus will support the bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: I spoke to this bill on second reading as well, so I don't want to reinvent the wheel here or speak too long, but there are a few concerns that we have with the bill here.

As the member for Dartmouth North mentioned, there's very little representation for the public or opportunities for the public to be involved in crafting what is a really important plan. My reading of the bill is that some of that could possibly be addressed through regulations or other means. I hope that does happen as we move forward.

On the other hand, I spent almost two and a half years in the department and I know that in the past the department was sometimes reluctant to get involved in transit and transportation beyond roads and highways and bridges. I am encouraged to see that there is a whole range of options here - roads, bridges, highways, ferries, transit, rail, airports, and ports. That's encouraging to see: a more holistic approach to transportation and to planning that the province is getting involved in. I do appreciate that as well.

I would just say, from my own experience in my own constituency that I represent, transportation is really, really a huge concern. My constituency is bursting at the seams. The original plan for Bedford West, I believe, was about 20 years of growth and they achieved that in eight. It's wonderful that so many people want to live there, but, of course, with growth comes strain on everything - roads, hospitals, schools, and so on.

The one piece that I mentioned in Question Period during this session, and I know the minister knows is really, really important - not just for me but for members all around Bedford Basin - is the issue of the Bedford ferries at Mill Cove and Larry Uteck, and then ultimately, actually, one at Shannon Park in Dartmouth. It is something that appeals to members on all sides of the aisle and on all sides of the Basin as well.

I'm optimistic, in that sense, to see what the province is willing to do and really help manage that growth in some of our fastest-growing areas, which is a real concern.

With those few comments, I will take my seat. As I say, this is a good bill overall and we're happy to support it.

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

The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues across the way for their comments on this bill.

As we all know, HRM is experiencing a period of growth unlike anything it has seen before. While that's very positive, it puts strain on the existing transportation infrastructure. That calls for action to ensure we are positioned to handle and harness future growth. Mr. Speaker, the new regional transportation agency created by this legislation will enable the Province and Halifax Regional Municipality to work more collaboratively on transportation challenges and opportunities.

Again, I want to stress that the regional transportation agency is not being created because the Province and HRM don't already co-operate on transportation issues. We do. However, it is on an informal and ad hoc basis, which is what I said before. Creation of this new body ensures a structured approach to the transportation challenges and opportunities that HRM faces. I am confident that the creation of this agency ensures we will have all the right people in the room working collaboratively to plot the best path forward for HRM and its residents.

There has been a lot of conversation throughout this bill and even through this legislative sitting about active transportation. I want to reassure members that active transit and transportation is included as a mode of transportation in this bill. The bill states: "... The objects of the Agency are to conduct (a) a comprehensive review of all modes of transportation associated with the Municipality including roads, bridges, highways, ferries, transit, rail..." and it goes on.

It also goes on to say in Section 5(a)(i) that the objects of the agency are to conduct "a regional approach to transportation consistent with the Municipality's growth and development..." plan.

This means that this agency will build - which I've already said - on the already great work that has been completed by HRM and their Integrated Mobility Plan. It's a 10-year plan that guides investment in active transportation. This is not about sidestepping what HRM has already done. It's about collaborating. It's about coordinating.

The other things that were mentioned, talking about Bill No. 57, the great bill that we all talked about last night that everyone voted yes for in Committee of the Whole House, talks about the core active transportation network. It means a central and connected network of active transportation facilities for walking, biking, or rolling to and from key community destinations.

It also talks about the government's goals with respect to active transportation, which are to establish a provincial active transportation strategy to increase active transportation options by 2023, and to complete core active transportation networks that are accessible for all ages and all abilities in 65 per cent of the province's communities by 2030.

There have also been, in both second and third reading, comments that this agency will not be consulting with the public. That's not correct. This agency will be consulting with the public and stakeholders. The board size is unrestricted so that they can allow more people to join the board as needed, and for stakeholders to become involved.

Mr. Speaker, I'm excited about this agency. I'm excited about collaboration. I'm excited about coordination. I know I probably sound like a broken record to the members, but for me, when you collaborate and when you coordinate and you bring all the people in together, that is how you have success. That's how you make sure you're successful. (Applause)

I'm looking forward to the good work that will come out of this agency - work and future planning that will make sure that Nova Scotians will enjoy the betterment of this.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to close debate on Bill No. 61, the Joint Regional Transportation Agency. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 61.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 43.

Bill No. 43 - The Motor Vehicle Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 43, the Motor Vehicle Act, be read for a third time and do pass.

I look forward to hearing from my honourable colleagues from across the aisle.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'll be very brief in my comments.

We support this bill here. A lot of common sense amendments to it, on clarity, around impairment, and on cyclist signals, which is a great step as well, and loud cars, which is something that I know the member for Clayton Park West hears about a lot. I hear about it a lot - people gunning up and down Larry Uteck. I know it happens. Enforcement is always the issue, of course, but it is good to have that in place in the Act and then further refined through regulations.

I just wanted to commend the minister's department and the minister as well for, I think, being quite responsive on this bill. As I mentioned earlier, it's a big bill, one of the biggest ones in government, and they've made responsible changes along the way, not just here, but also recently to allow for ridesharing in the municipality. That was a good piece of work that the previous government did to amend the Motor Vehicle Act in a reasonable way, and looking forward to the Traffic Safety Act as well, which was passed back in 2018. I know that the department is very close to wrapping up the consultations and the regulations on that, which is a whole lot of work I know.

All in all, we're happy with these amendments and look forward to some more positive steps on the traffic file in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I'm glad to rise to speak to these amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act that bring forward three distinct changes from the new Traffic Safety Act. Allowing municipalities to set bylaws around muffler noise is a good thing and so is allowing the use of bicycle signals.

I know these changes have been asked for by municipalities and community members and so they are very welcome. However, I must note how unusual a situation it is that we passed a new Traffic Safety Act now several years ago but were required to wait

another three to four years for the important changes it will contain, and while we amend the old Act, as we wait.

I understand the reasons we have to wait the three to four years. I'm not criticizing the work and I have said in this House before and I'll say it again right now, the work that the department has been doing on that new Act is amazing and I appreciate the ample consultation that the department has had with us, in this House, but also community stakeholders, it's really good work. Still, though, it's weird that we pass a bill and now we're amending the old bill until we wait for the new bill.

I know that both the old and new Acts are significant pieces of legislation and that updating the Motor Vehicle Act is a lengthy project. The Motor Vehicle Act has become long and unwieldy and the new Traffic Safety Act will modernize and make it more straightforward and adaptable to changes that can address the reality of how people get around and how quickly it can change.

It must reflect what Nova Scotians want to see as road users, who are not just drivers but more and more who are pedestrians, cyclists and people who use mobility devices. Have we heard this before today? I think we have.

There is so much to consider here in addition to road safety. We also have to consider accessibility, equity and environmental impacts, making it as easy and as safe as possible to get around, no matter what the mode is, Mr. Speaker. We have to consider how we are building complete communities where it is safe, easy, accessible and enjoyable to get to work, school and the grocery store.

I have appreciated the approach of the previous government and continued by the current government of broadly consulting with the public on the details of the multiple sections of regulations in the new Traffic Safety Act and including Opposition members, as I've just said.

We've seen an amazing amount of input from Nova Scotians through this process and we will have stronger regulations because of it.

I'd like to thank the many people and organizations who have pushed and worked hard to make the regulations better and our roads safer. This includes Cycle Nova Scotia, the Ecology Action Centre, the Halifax Cycling Coalition, Carshare, HRM Safe Streets for Everyone and more. Because of the work of these organizations there are important changes in the new Act, such as penalties for the right hook that hits a cyclist, dooring a cyclist, and a doubling of fines for offences where a vulnerable road-user is a victim.

I've been told that not all of the recommendations from cycling and road safety advocates will make it into the new regulations, which is unfortunate. I also have to register

some dismay that it will take so long, again, to have these changes reflected - another three to four years.

Some of these safety measures, Mr. Speaker, are too important to have to wait another three to four years. I would challenge the minister to consider how she could bring some of them forward sooner, as she has done in this bill, possibly with future amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act.

It's also essential to note that people with disabilities, people living in poverty, racialized people and people experiencing homelessness are all impacted by the rules of the road in an enhanced and unequal way. The minister must consider this when developing new regulations.

[5:00 p.m.]

People who use bicycles as mobility aids rely on road rules being fair and not requiring people to dismount at certain points, for example. People for whom a bicycle is their sole mode of transport or who cannot afford to travel by any other means, are unfairly impacted by regulations that would seize their bicycle as a penalty, for example. Regulations are still being consulted on as we speak. Nova Scotians are right now able to submit input on the offences and penalties section. As far as I know, none of the regulations are finalized.

I will close by urging the minister and her department to not consider the regulations or the new Act a done deal, to remain open to adopting recommendations from Nova Scotians on how to make the new Act better and how to make safety and equity a priority, how to consider safety and comfort for vulnerable road users and marginalized groups and how to do this as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

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

The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Thank you to my colleagues for their comments and support for this bill.

The proposed amendments for impaired driving, bicycle traffic signals, and muffler noise will help improve road safety for all users. They will also support active transportation on Nova Scotia roads.

The bicycle traffic signals amendment allows both municipalities and the province to install bicycle traffic signals. It outlines the rules of the road related to these signals. For those who violate these signals, they are subject to a fine. These amendments will support active transit and increase safety for cyclists.

The muffler noise amendment will give municipalities the authority to create bylaws to address long-standing concerns about muffler noise.

The final proposed amendment, Mr. Speaker, will provide clarity around impaired driving provisions. It clarifies that an officer can suspend a driver's licence for 90 days when a driver fails or refuses to comply with a demand for a test under the Criminal Code. I know all of us here in this House want to make sure that we're putting forth clear legislation that will continue to make our roads safe. The clarity will help our policing community.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments align with our platform and my mandate by supporting active transportation and enabling municipalities to be responsive to their residents.

Before I close, I would like to thank the staff at the Department of Public Works who have worked so hard to put this legislation forward and continue to work on the Traffic Safety Act. I can tell you that in my short time in that department, Nova Scotians are well-served by the people who work for the Department of Public Works. (Applause)

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly an honour to close debate on Bill No. 43.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 43. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, will you please call Bill No. 64.

Bill No. 64 - Cannabis Control Act (amended)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, before moving Bill No. 64, I'd like to actually make a few remarks on it.

Public health and safety are primary goals of our cannabis legislation, but it is also important that the Charter of Rights and Nova Scotians be protected.

The amendment to the Cannabis Control Act will better align our provincial laws with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The amendment to the Cannabis Control Act will now define a reasonable standard for police searches under the Act. Mr. Speaker, the amendment will ensure usage of acceptable criminal legal standards to determine when police can search.

The objective of the Act is to protect public health and safety, protect youth, and restrict their access to cannabis, ensure cannabis is sold in accordance with the Act, and to deter unlawful activities in relation to cannabis through appropriate enforcement and sanctions.

Mr. Speaker, we have acted quickly to ensure that the standard of reasonable grounds for a search is clear for law enforcement and yet still protects the rights of the citizens. I look forward to comments.

THE SPEAKER: Would the minister please move third reading?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill No. 64.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: I spoke about this earlier. I don't really have too much more to add. I think it's a good bill.

I think one of the things, and the minister already touched on it, is that it raised the legal threshold to avoid any random search and seizures. It puts more accountability on the police organizations and on officers.

I'm pleased to say that one of the things that I noticed the minister had mentioned is the fact that they moved quickly and how important this is for the public interest. I look forward to November 30th when the minister also suggested this about street checks. If we can move this swiftly in the interest of the public, then I do believe that this language can be used to, hopefully, move swiftly in regard to street checks, too.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I don't have much to say about this. I am also pleased to see that the government acted quickly in response to a court decision, which is where this arose. We certainly always have believed in and advocated for Charter-compliant legislation in this House, so it is important that this is.

I would echo the words of my colleague, the member for Preston, in saying that there are other problematic things related to the Department of Justice: policies, laws,

orders that need looking at, that have been acknowledged by this House, and so we look forward to diligent and rapid action on those as well.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their comments. I would now like to close debate on Bill No. 64.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 64.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 48.

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, I rise simply to move third reading on this bill.

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

The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, I rise again to close debate.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 48.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 50.

Bill No. 50 - Ardnamurchan Club Act.

I invite everyone to stand up and try to say that. (Laughter)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I am really hoping my colleague from Inverness would speak for an hour, at least, on his visit to Ardnamurchan back in - what year?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: 1996.

COLTON LEBLANC: '96. I was just born then, I think. (Laughter). We will keep debate short on this. I move third reading of Bill No. 50.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 50.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, will you please call Bill No. 57.

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

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

HON. TIM HALMAN: I don't know if I should put my flak jacket on or not here, but I ask that Bill No 57 move to third reading and do pass. I'll reserve my comments for after and I look forward to the comments of my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HON. KEITH IRVING: My comments will be brief, I believe. First of all, I just wanted to thank the minister. I did go back and look at second reading comments and I want to thank the minister for acknowledging the work done by previous governments for this bill. As we talked about earlier, staff indicated to me this work had really begun

in 2017, which was the time when the member for Timberlea-Prospect was in that minister's seat, and there have been several since then.

There's lots of credit to share in terms of the good things in the bill, but I do want to acknowledge the work of the member for Timberlea-Prospect, the Leader of the Official Opposition, about his vision for the environment that he's brought to this House. He was the first to speak about Boat Harbour in terms of environmental racism. He introduced the words "climate change" to the minister's portfolio, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. He introduced diversity and inclusion to ministers' mandate letters, including the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. He was the first to set out in regulations a commitment to 80 per cent renewable electricity, and most importantly, first to set out our ambitions to get off coal by 2030.

I do want to thank the minister for bringing this forward. I had a very small window in terms of the work on this, and it was a collaboration among, I think probably, five ministers to get us to where we are today.

I want to thank the staff at Environment and Climate Change that's been led by Associate Deputy Minister Jason Hollett. He's an incredible civil servant and has built a team of highly dedicated, young civil servants to work on this bill and work on these important issues for the province.

I also would like to thank members of the Round Table led by chair Scott Skinner. They were very helpful in my short time there with their advice on the consultation that took place, which broke some new ground, I think, with respect to reaching out to communities that don't usually get involved in consultations.

This is a good bill. It's an extremely important bill. It could have been improved, we feel. There are some gaps, and we won't get into a long list. I do want to mention energy efficiency. As an architect I saw a tremendous opportunity for that to be a stronger part of the bill, and I think the other really glaring - the other real improvement would have been more interim targets. There were many minor tweaks that were debated on the floor of the House yesterday that could have improved the bill, but all in all it's an important bill and in essence a good bill.

The only thinking I had last night after we debated in Committee of the Whole House on Bills, and I reflected upon the process that this bill has been going through this week. Citizens came to Law Amendments Committee with ideas on how the bill could be improved and the Committee of the Whole House on Bills sat and made some attempts to improve the bill with 32 amendments. Many of those were ideas being brought forward from the public. We had young people out in front of the Legislature chanting, "make the amendments."

[5:15 p.m.]

I think all in all there was some frustration in the process, and I reflect on that and whether change in processes could happen in this House in the future I don't know, but the concept of putting things into legislation is well known and advocates for various issues really want to see things written in legislation with the concept that it's much harder to change a piece of legislation than in regulations or policies, et cetera.

It's much harder to change a bill, but I think the events last night also showed us that it's also much harder to create a bill. On important bills like this, finding a way in which the process can have the necessary time and careful deliberations to make those tweaks, to debate the big issues of a bill like this, I think we would have been better served as a province if we had a process in this Legislature that gave us the necessary time and deliberation to have the best bill that we can have.

I think a prime example of that was our accessibility legislation, where the Law Amendments Committee really turned the corner on that bill so that it was pulled back and government worked more closely with the advocates in the accessibility world. That was an example of where careful deliberation and time really created a much better bill for Nova Scotians.

In closing, the measure of the success of this bill will be whether this bill inspires and pushes the collective actions of government and Nova Scotians to make substantial changes to address and do our part to address climate change. It's imperative that we do our part to address climate change and position Nova Scotians to benefit from the opportunities of this transition.

Madam Speaker, this is an important bill. I think we should be proud of this work, as difficult as it was at times. We will be supporting this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Madam Speaker, I want to begin with a quotation from one of my favourite writers, Mary Oliver. Mary Oliver was a writer who recently died. All of her writing, poetry and essays, were rooted in her observation of the natural world and her connection with the natural world. Her writing is astoundingly beautiful and so I'm going to pepper in a couple of her zingers, her good lines, into my speech tonight.

I want to begin with this quote: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" As I've started with every speech about this bill, I want to acknowledge the good work that has been done here. This is a good bill and reflects many years of important work by the staff in the Department of Environment and Climate Change and many experts and NGOs in many areas who have been researching, educating, and influencing policy for many years.

It's very good that there are many legislated targets in this bill. This is something we know is essential for the province to meet our greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, our clean energy targets, and our land and water protection targets, as well as many others.

Many of the aforementioned experts have been advocating for these targets being legislated for many years. I'm saying many, a lot. I realize I should have maybe done one more pass through this writing. Many- ooh, I just said it.

Last night, though, Madam Speaker, we had the Committee of the Whole House on Bills, which is a time in the process of the passing of a bill when we, as lawmakers, can really grapple with it, get into the nitty-gritty of it, clause by clause, line by line as we did last night. It's a part of the process that can be dynamic and productive as amendments can strengthen the already existing text and other suggestions can be proposed.

But last night, Madam Speaker, we knew from the outset that most of our work in making these suggestions would be for nothing as the minister had announced to the media that he wouldn't be accepting amendments, that the bill would pass as is. As though it was perfect already. In the end, the government did accept two very important amendments, and that was heartening, but the bill is still far from perfect.

At the beginning of the committee, the minister rose and quoted from a number of representatives from environmental organizations - the Ecology Action Centre, Nature Nova Scotia, and even Jo-Ann Roberts from the federal Green Party. The irony of these quotations, of course, was that all of those parties and many, many more had come to Law Amendments to, yes, for the most part praise the bill - the existence of the bill, the actual writing of the legislation - but also to suggest very clear amendments to strengthen it, to make it a bill with teeth so that we can achieve our climate change goals. It bears repeating here, Madam Speaker, it's to do our part to keep the warming of the planet to 1.5 degrees.

It was particularly ironic that many people involved in these organizations and others were outside the building last night, yelling. So, we could hear, "Amend the legislation. Amend the legislation," and yet, the minister and the government moved through the night, head down, determined to get their perfect bill through the committee with no changes or improvements, save the two important amendments regarding environmental racism.

Second quote from Mary Oliver: "To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work."

As my colleague from Dartmouth South pointed out last night, the amendments we proposed to this bill represented experts from the community and were friendly amendments. That is, they did not change the spirit of the bill, rather they would have strengthened it, offering steps and plans to reach the targets within the bill. A road map, as

it were. As I've previously said, this is a good bill, an important bill, an essential bill, but the scope of the bill demanded much more co-operation with the Opposition parties and the people who presented at Law Amendments Committee.

Like most important pieces of legislation, it requires deep listening and a commitment to people over profits. Of course, we know in this case that if we actually put people before profits, first and forward, the profits will follow, and that the green and clean economy is one that we need to boldly jump into and right now.

Third quote from Mary Oliver: "Love yourself. Then forget it. Then, love the world."

Here's the thing, Madam Speaker. We need to act now. We need to act boldly now. We have less than 10 years to reach many of the essential goals, and in order to do that, we need to start now.

Even then, the targets for greenhouse gas reductions, clean energy, and land protection do need to be strengthened. We need to start working on the goals that are in place now, not next Spring when the climate plan is announced, not in 2023 when the planned implementation of the Lahey report is due, even though it's ready to be implemented today.

The lack of ambition and self-satisfaction with the targets that are floors and not ceilings to go beyond, shows an overall lack of realism about what we're actually dealing with. When talking about this bill, the government has said, don't worry, we're setting the targets low, and we'll probably exceed them.

There are few interim targets to meet and fewer in this government's four-year mandate. Many of our amendments and the ones that the Liberals proposed last night had to do with interim targets that could keep us on track. If the government is so sure that we will meet our targets, then why is it afraid to put interim targets into the legislation?

Greta Thunberg, the young Danish climate activist, very famously said, "I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day and then I want you to act."

In this bill, there is no real sense of fear for the future or that we are running out of time. It's like no one listened this past summer when we heard the UN say that we are in a code red for humanity - the same summer that 700 people were killed in a heatwave in Canada.

Climate modelling is getting more and more precise, and it gives us a better idea of how climate change will affect us. Though it's hard to think about, we need to be realistic about how climate will be changing the world that our kids are growing up in. A recent report from *The Economist* illustrates what different scenarios of warming will look like:

“Children born in 2020 will face a two- to seven-fold increase in extreme climate-related events compared to those born in 1960, under current climate pledges. Those born in 1960, for example, will experience four heat waves in their lifetime; those born in 2020 will experience 30 on current trends, 22 under 2°C warming, and 18 if warming is limited to 1.5°C. In a 3°C world, a six-year-old in 2020 will experience twice as many wildfires and tropical cyclones, three times more river floods, four times more crop failures, five times more droughts, and 36 times more heat waves than someone born in 1960.”

It’s sobering to hear those numbers, and a little depressing.

We don’t all have children in this House, but we all have children in our lives. For the record, I’d like to read a few names.

Clayton, Eva, Fred, Roseanna, Alison, Molly, Ana, Sam, Rory, Françoise, Aimé, Jason, Keira-Jill, Maisie, Isaac, Moss, Angus, Atlin, Salia, Sezar, Shayden, Sakylo, Syvaya, Sijora, Sage, Ben, Gabrielle, Mathieu, and Felix. Those are the names of our caucus’s and our caucus staff’s kids.

Ben, Gabriel, Malachi, Hannah, Larissa, Olivia, William, Nicholas, Scott, and Laura. Those are the names of my siblings’ children.

Cash, Polly, Ida, Isaac, Winnie, Daphne, and Sophia. Those are the names of some of my best friends’ kids.

The kids that I’ve just mentioned range in age from two to mid-30s. They are the actual children we are talking about when we talk about protecting the planet for our children. Everyone in this room has children in their lives that they can think of when we talk about who we are debating this bill for. These are the children we need to feel panic about. This is the world we are confronting and that we as elected officials need to tell the truth about and plan appropriate action.

I am not by nature a fearmonger or someone who wants to stir things up - well, sometimes I do - or even oppose for the sake of opposing. That’s really not my thing. That is not the message I’m trying to drive toward today. Panic might not be the best reaction to climate change, because it can lead to chaos and danger. But the good thing is we can feel the urgency that panic induces, but we have tools in front of us to deal with the problems and to make the changes we need to make, to stop the worst effects of climate change.

We can have hope in ideas and opportunities ahead of us, and dare I say, hope is the thing that should drive us and could drive us. I felt hopeful at Law Amendments listening to so many experts who were proposing such good changes to the bill to make it

better and more effective. I felt hope in the public consultations conducted by the Clean Foundation this Summer. I feel hope when I think of all of those kids I just named a few moments ago and when I think of the thousands of students who have taken over the streets to demand better from their governments here in Halifax and all over the world.

In hope, I say we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 58 per cent by 2030; we need to implement the Lahey report now; we needed to implement the Doelle-Lahey report yesterday; and we need to create efficiency targets and interim targets that actually get us to net-zero on time.

[5:30 p.m.]

We have so many smart, expert, passionate Nova Scotians who are working hard on climate solutions. I don't think, with this bill, the government has truly listened to them. We on this side of the House have brought many of the solutions to the government. The government turned them down. Make no mistake, we will continue working hard to get some of those changes accepted. The success and the health of our province depends on it.

I have discovered that humility is a scarce commodity in this profession, but I hope for the good of all that climate change will truly inspire all of us to put the people of our province, and the land and the water itself, ahead of any other pressing force that might be making this government pass this bill without the sensible improvements I have suggested.

I will close with these last words from Mary Oliver: "I tell you this to break your heart, by which I mean only that it break open and never close again to the rest of the world." Thank you. (Applause)

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

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: It is my honour and pleasure to speak in support of the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act.

The climate crisis has put society at a critical juncture. I am pleased and I am proud that our government is taking action. I'm pleased and I'm proud that our province is taking concrete steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I am pleased and I am proud that multiple government departments, including mine, are being given a legislated mandate to reach real outcomes to think and act differently. It has long been clear to me that we need to act.

I've been involved in environmental action for many years, both professionally and personally. I volunteered for Clean Nova Scotia, now Clean Foundation, doing policy, program, and legal work. My husband and I spent a year trying to live zero-waste - not bringing into our home anything that could not be composted or recycled.

This was back in the day when municipalities only collected what they could recycle. At that time, it meant polyethylene terephthalate and high-density polyethylene. That's number 1 and number 2. For anyone who isn't familiar, the plastic classification scheme goes to 7. Back at that time, the vast majority of plastic you faced in a store was not 1 or 2. In addition, we focused on distance products travelled, how they were grown, and how they were processed.

What was that like? It took time and effort. I must say that wall of yogurt is daunting at the best of times - between figuring out the prices, looking at the flavours, and figuring out what my kids might want to eat - but when you have to flip it over and try and find the numbers on the bottom, it definitely takes extra time.

It involved travel to multiple vendors, which has its own environmental impact.

That change was disruptive. It significantly changed the rhythm and patterns of our life, and it was expensive. We were incredibly fortunate to have the resources to be able to do that but, absolutely, not everyone has the means.

It also took education and resources. We had many conversations with friends in the environmental field, working through which products were better based on their packaging, how they were grown, how they were produced, and how far they travelled.

And then we had children. At that moment when my personal stake in this planet and its well-being became even greater, my ability to continue individual actions was significantly diminished. All these challenges - add in a newborn. We tried to continue, but it became harder and harder.

I tell you this for a few reasons. I want to share what that process taught me.

Practically speaking, it taught me to substitute in recipes. More importantly, it drove home for me the fallacy of the idea that environmental change can come about by individual action alone. Our efforts were working against the systems that existed. I felt like a small fish swimming upstream. Individually, I might get to my destination, but I certainly wasn't going to have any impact on the river.

Real change needs to be at a systems level and that is what this bill is about. It has long been clear to me that we need to act. I know this as a mother, as an individual, as a community member, a Nova Scotian, as the beneficiary and a trustee of the riches of this planet. I also know this as Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. I am proud, as well, that the students of our province know this.

Our children are standing up and speaking out. In the last two months, hundreds of students rallied in Halifax urging our government to take action on climate change. I can say we heard them. Our government has heard them. With the introduction and passage of

this bill, I am proud to state that we are standing with them in taking action to delay and prevent ecological disaster.

I'm also immensely proud that this legislation requires us to embrace a Mi'kmaw way of looking at the world, a Mi'kmaw way of seeing our planet as interconnected. This legislation, in what I believe is a first for our province, embeds two Mi'kmaw words into law, enshrining two concepts: Etuaptmumk and Netukulimk.

Etuaptmumk is the idea of Two-Eyed Seeing, a Mi'kmaw guiding principle that encourages us to use both western science and Mi'kmaw knowledge to better understand our planet. It embraces western knowledge and Mi'kmaw knowledge, combining both ways of knowing and doing service to Mother Earth, leaving our world a better place for future generations.

Netukulimk is the heart of Mi'kmaw knowledge, namely that all human beings have the responsibility to look after one another and our planet Earth in environmentally sustainable ways.

I am also incredibly proud to be the minister responsible for public school students in this province and the role that allows me to play in supporting this important work, as we enhance our environmental education and our curriculum outcomes to reflect the dangers of climate change, the importance of thinking differently to overcome our environmental challenges, and the skills and tools needed to meet those challenges.

Together, Etuaptmumk and Netukulimk serve as guiding lights - foundational concepts for which our approach to curricular renewal as it relates to climate change and environmental education. They will help guide us as we develop inclusive and accessible resources for our public school system and beyond.

Madam Speaker, the core of our work will be working together. We'll be departments working together, sectors aligned to reach our green economy goals and people of different backgrounds fighting for this common goal. We are committed to bringing this new lens to our skilled trades programming, and we are committed to looking at the world with a green economy lens, as well as the lens of Etuaptmumk and Netukulimk.

As a member of this government, as a representative of the people of Nova Scotia, as the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, but also as a Nova Scotian, a citizen of this planet, and a mother, I am thrilled to have a role in the passing of this important legislation and the implementation of the actions that will flow from it.

Madam Speaker, I implore members today to move forward together to embrace the target, spirit, and goals of this bill to support this legislation and to pass it immediately.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: My remarks will be very brief tonight, and I won't attempt to echo the eloquence of my colleague from Dartmouth North, who I think did an amazing job. For historical purposes, I suppose, I do want to enumerate the amendments that we proposed to the bill last night. Those are:

- to work across sectors and communities to create a green jobs plan that will ensure a just transition for workers and their communities;
- to increase our GHG emissions reduction target for 2030 to 58 per cent below 2005 levels and to remove language about GHG removals and offsets;
- to create a really detailed plan for energy efficiency programming; to adopt the National Building Code within 18 months of it being published;
- to require that all new buildings be net-zero-ready and zero-carbon-ready by 2030 at the latest;
- to increase our zero-emission vehicle mandate to 50 per cent of sales by 2030 and 100 per cent by 2035;
- to increase our target to 90 per cent renewable energy by 2030;
- to create a provincial carbon budget and provincial greenhouse gas inventory;
- to release annual progress reports with updated carbon budgets;
- to set an interim goal for land protection of at least 17 per cent by 2025;
- to implement the Lahey review by the end of 2022 and to implement an immediate moratorium on all clear-cutting on Crown land in the meantime;
- to introduce legislation to prevent pending protected areas from being secretly delisted without public consultation;
- to protect the remaining 150 areas on the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan by 2022;
- to make well water testing free;
- to increase shellfish and seaweed aquaculture by at least 5 per cent by 2026;
- to put an immediate moratorium on new open net-pen fish farms and implement the Doelle-Lahey report fully, with an emphasis on social licence;
- to develop a universal school food plan that sources food from local farms;
- to introduce extended producer responsibility, as recommended by the municipalities;
- to broaden the scope of environmental education and ensure that it is introduced into curricula immediately;
- to create a panel to address environmental racism by the end of 2022, with recommendations for redress coming to the province by the end of 2023 - that one made it under the line;
- to end all fossil fuel subsidies, including for research and promotion by the end of 2022;
- to end all new calls for bids for oil and gas exploration on Nova Scotia's offshore; and
- to create an environmental commissioner in the Office of the Auditor General.

Madam Speaker, what I hear from those who work in this field is that if government doesn't strengthen some of the targets in this bill, which it chose not to do last night, it will not actually succeed with its GHG emissions reduction target. By not having interim targets for many of these goals, this government has chosen to let the next government reckon with that reality.

We are especially anxious to see the forthcoming Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth, but it is unclear why this government needs so much more time for a plan that was due at the end of 2020, according to the 2019 SDGA, but that is a theme in this legislation - packing targets with extra time. We don't have extra time, Madam Speaker. This is the meaning of a code red.

I was listening to the radio this morning and they said that the difference between a 1.5 degree target and a 2 degree target - which is being discussed at COP26 - is a million economic migrants; a million climate migrants in the next 15 years. That is unfathomable to contemplate, in the same way as some of the things that my colleague was speaking to.

We have a lot to be proud of. This is a good bill, but we can't rest on our laurels in a crisis. Other jurisdictions are pushing ahead to meet their fair-share targets and we need to do the same. There are others that are leading the way. In breaking news, Quebec just announced that they have joined the Beyond Oil & Gas Alliance, along with Costa Rica and Denmark. We could also do that. Instead, today the latest round of bids for exploration on the offshore closed. That is sort of the opposite of a moratorium.

I thought I would close by reading a few of the many - all negative - comments that were collected as part of the CNSOPB's process for collecting those bids - it's open for comments. In their executive summary of those comments, they say:

“The majority of the comments submitted expressed a policy position that offshore oil and gas activity is putting our communities, our marine ecosystems and our climate at unacceptable risk; and indicated that no further oil exploration should take place offshore Nova Scotia. A number of the comments noted a report by the International Energy Agency ‘Net Zero by 2050’, indicating that no new oil and gas fields should be brought on production due to concerns over climate change . . .

Specific comments indicated that the CNSOPB should no longer exist and suggested the Board is only concerned with the interests of the petroleum industry. Some comments suggested the CNSOPB's mandate should be changed to focus on renewable energy.”

The last part of the summary that I will quote is where they say:

“It’s important to understand that the existence and mandate of the CNSOPB and whether or not oil and gas activity should be permitted in the Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area is a matter of government policy and as such is beyond the authority of the CNSOPB.”

Madam Speaker, we have the tools we need. We sit in a place of privilege where we, the people in this Chamber, can have an impact on the course of the planet. That is not hyperbole, that is real, that is true, that is about the laws that we’re making.

[5:45 p.m.]

This is a good bill, but it could be much better. It could be much better while actually retaining the spirit and content of this bill. So we are dismayed that there was not in this House a collaborative process although I know we will hear about how this received all-party support and it’s a major victory. It is - it’s a good bill.

To the many dismayed climate activists who I’ve spoken to in the last week - a lot of people said, we came and spoke at the Law Amendments Committee for the STGA and it’s Groundhog Day, we’re back here two years later, what’s changed? I said to them, well, one thing that has changed is that you all spoke and said you wanted targets in the bill and now we’re here, two years later, and there are targets in the bill. That’s a change but it’s a change that’s too slow and it’s too slow in the face of the challenges that confront us now.

This bill will pass tonight, we will vote for it, but we will continue to press for the urgent action that is required. We will continue to look to government and to press government towards leadership in this area.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Madam Speaker, my comments will be brief. I just want to make a few points.

Of course, we’re supporting this legislation that is before us. A lot of that was part of the conversations we were having as a government, the targets are the same . . . (Interruption). I’m told “similar,” but based on the consultation that we had that happened with Nova Scotians, here we are. So we’re going to support this bill.

I just want to make a couple of points very quickly to what my colleagues said. The tools are already there. We’re already number one in solar, we’re number one in energy efficiency, we’re number one in workforce - maybe number two now, we were number one. But we have great staff within these departments that have really taken on the challenge when it comes to climate change and our energy mix, and they should be applauded for the work that they do.

As the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables would know, the team from Energy is going 24/7. It's pretty amazing with the regulations they deal with and the policy they have to deal with on a daily basis, working with the utility and other players in the industry. I always like getting on my feet and rising and thanking staff, regardless of what department. They do a lot of great work.

Just a couple of points: This is very strong legislation. There is a 10-year window, with the elimination of coal. There are going to be a number of significant pieces that are going to have to happen outside of government that we're all going to be watching. What does the Atlantic Loop mean? That's a big part of this conversation, so I'm hopeful that the negotiations continue to be strong between all levels of government, in Nova Scotia Power, and all the players, because that needs to happen.

There needs to be a mega-shift in our energy mix to meet that 2030 target. I'm optimistic about it in the conversations I've had, and I have faith that the government of today is doing the exact thing. That's one thing I want to make.

I made this point last night, too, and it is important. The federal government loves efficiency. They love it and I don't blame them. We have been able to help tens of thousands of Nova Scotians because of the money and the negotiations that we have with the federal government on expanding our programs, on the solar program, on low-income housing. Thousands and thousands and thousands of retrofits. I've said this multiple times, from 16 to 70 companies in a year in our solar program because of that incentive. These things are already in place. Really, the things that I'm looking for - and I'll continue to advocate for it.

I've said it before, in some of those deals, we have some really great opportunities to give our students a really awesome chance to get into the green energy sector. All the tools are in place in the Department of Education. The trade schools are there, expand them. Expand them. We have the programs that are in place. We can support our Mi'kmaw students, get into energy efficiency. There's 10 years worth of work. There are 2,500 homes just in those communities. The trades - if we're going to be talking about mega wind projects, the Atlantic Loop, solar, et cetera, that needs to be in the schools now. Immediately. The tools are there. The trade schools are there. Expand your trade schools and put that in because that's going to create a whole new interest in what we're trying to accomplish as a province.

I'll just finish off by saying we're supporting this bill, absolutely. Congratulations to everyone, really, because this is multi-governments over multi-years getting us to this point. We've all done our part. They did their part, we did our part, here we are tonight with your bill. To everyone, congratulations, and I really want to stress the fact that when you get into negotiations, efficiency is really - you're going to get a lot of requests for it and it helps a lot of families that need that help. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Madam Speaker, I just want to thank everyone for their comments. I won't be too long, and my words certainly will not be as eloquent as the rest of the speakers so far here this evening. I really just wanted to touch base on a number of things.

I am so pleased about this bill. So, so pleased, and I know the Minister of Environment and Climate Change realizes how important this bill is to me. Before the member was even elected, I think we had a number of discussions in 2013 and 2014, a number of discussions around the environment and what I wanted to see in Opposition.

I will be honest, for the first four years of being with the PC Party, I was the only female around the table. I often felt that my passion for the environment wasn't always - I don't even know how to articulate it, but I know that I felt that I . . . (Interruption) Pardon? Yes, I just felt that there were times in the early days that, perhaps, maybe I was pushed back a little bit. Maybe I was thinking too far outside the box, and that often resulted in me speaking to like-minded individuals. I have one to the right of me here. I took a lot of comfort in connecting with people who were like-minded.

I can say, honestly, with my children being 23 and 19 now, but they have always had a deep appreciation for the environment. We were out in the woods all the time. They grew up with just a deep appreciation and have taught me a lot about the environment.

My first experience in realizing - I never really ever thought about the environment that much until Grade 10. It would have been 1985. I think it was the International Year of the Youth in Canada. Out of my school, I was chosen to go and have lunch with David Suzuki. It was quite an awakening to learn how important our environment was, and it was profoundly a humbling experience.

As a family, we would sit home on Sunday nights, and after *The Beachcombers* or *Little House on the Prairie*, *The Nature of Things* would come on. Like I said, it was just so profoundly a humbling experience to be able to travel to Bridgewater as a Grade 10 student and stay in a hotel and wake up the next morning and know that I was going to have lunch with David Suzuki. That's when I really started learning a little bit about recycling, and that really propelled my interest in the environment.

From there, after high school I had moved to Maine, where I felt that the State of Maine was so much further advanced than Nova Scotia in protecting its air, water, and land. That's really where my interest came from. Decades later, I try to do my best to protect our land and water and air. I know that in this Chamber, I think a total of four or five times, I introduced the Clean Air Act. It was, I believe, supported by the NDP, but never, ever accepted by the Liberal government. What I'm happy to say is that much of that piece of legislation that I introduced has been adopted into this and will cover that bill.

That bill was actually just basically a blueprint from a bill that was introduced in New Brunswick in 1998, a bill that works very well in that province. It was always disappointing that we didn't pass that bill. I will say that . . . (Interruption) I could bring it in tomorrow. I don't have to now, because my good colleague has covered it.

Just in moving forward, I do want to thank a few other people. I learned a lot about land protection, and I want to give a shout-out to Chris Miller with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. He taught me a lot through a lot of conversations, and I was able to network and set him up with other individuals who had an influence on this bill. A big shout-out to him, as well as Matt Miller and Matt Duart for their conversations with me as well over the years. Like I said, it's always through the spirit of communication that we learn from one another. Again, a big shout-out to them, and I thank them.

This bill certainly will be embraced by us here in the Chamber, but as well, our constituents. When knocking on the doors this Summer, there's no doubt that health care was the number one issue, but in my constituency, the environment was definitely a very close number two issue. I'm sure that many of you experienced that, as well as being maybe a number one issue, because it certainly wasn't that far from health in my community.

We know that all Nova Scotians will definitely benefit from the cleaning of our economy and addressing the climate crisis and sustainable prosperity for future generations. They will benefit. I do believe that my children are going to be very happy with this piece of legislation.

I'm really happy to see too that the department is having discussions with Nova Scotia Power. We do have the Trenton power plant in Pictou County, and I've had a number of employees reach out to me with concerns around their employment. It's really nice to know that those discussions are happening and just reaffirming with them that they're being considered through all of this.

We must do better. We can do better. I have faith that we will.

In closing, there is a book that probably many of us are familiar with and it's my favourite book. It's called *The Giving Tree*. It's an amazing little book that I had for my kids and the mood of the book, *The Giving Tree*, is it begins with a very happy and jovial beginning and then it becomes very sad and dark in the middle and then happy again at the end. I think that through that book I've learned that having the ability to embrace the value of self-sacrifice as a gift given and received is truly invaluable. So what we can do today to do better to protect our environment is only truly protecting our children, their children, and so on and so on.

In closing, I just want to say thank you very much to my colleague. This was such a meaningful piece of legislation and I'm very, very proud of the minister and his department, as well as all of you in the Chamber. I know where everyone stands on this

issue, our common denominator is the same, it's just a matter of how we're going to get there.

[6:00 p.m.]

I know that with coming regulations and policies in the future, there's going to be lots of discussions. I do want to address - like consultations are always ongoing, that never stops, that has to always be something that is just consistent and ongoing. None of us can be absolutely absolute in our objective to get to the sincere objective of creating a healthier and cleaner environment. We have some members who bike to work, they're doing their part; we have some members who maybe have an electric car; and we have some members who have solar panels.

I'm guilty, I'm terrible at composting but I'm great at recycling. People say, my God, your recycle is just perfect. We all have different skill sets in attaining our common goal here, our common denominator.

I just want to say thanks to everyone, and I know that Bill No. 57 is going to be leaving a true, sincere legacy of all of us in the Chamber for agreeing to see this bill go forward, so thank you everyone.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. I just wanted to stand up and say yes, this is a good bill, and we will be voting on this bill, voting yes.

I just want to put this in everyone's thoughts and minds when maybe this weekend we might be able to do such a thing. I heard a reference to Dr. Suess, which I think is absolutely amazing because our kids need to be educated in all these pieces.

I think we need to maybe revisit the movie *The Lorax* because that speaks true to how we may eventually see our environment, hopefully not, but we need to be reminded of those pieces. I just wanted to say that and we will definitely be voting yes for this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

RONNIE LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I, too - we all support this bill, but as a rural MLA and a fisheries critic, I feel I should stand up and talk a little bit and say a few words on offshore oil and gas.

I did ask a question to the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables and I was quite encouraged by his answer, to be honest. Yesterday an amendment was put forward and I realize it didn't go through but what I think I want to communicate to this House today is that in rural Nova Scotia the fishery is the economic driver for most communities.

It's a \$2 billion industry, it's sustainable. A lot of young people are looking at the fishery as their future and for a community like Clare, like many others, it is the future of our community.

What I'm asking essentially is for the government going forward, and I know the minister yesterday said it, this is the beginning of the work. As you deliberate and move forward on climate, that you really take into consideration the impact of offshore oil and gas.

As the world transitions off of fossil fuels, I guess the question we all have to ask is: Is the risk too big? For me and the people I represent, they feel that that risk is certainly too big right now. What I want to convey is the anxiety around those decisions. I hope that you take my comment into consideration when you move forward with more legislation having to do with the environment.

I'm honoured to be voting for this bill. A lot of great work has been done by all levels of government. I just, again, hope you take into consideration the fishing community and those rural areas that really, really, really depend on that economy to survive. Mr. Speaker, I thank you. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

CHRIS PALMER: Mr. Speaker, I want to start my presentation just by stating: Hi, I'm Chris Palmer. I'm a Progressive Conservative and I believe climate change is real. (Applause)

I say that because I've never been an environmental warrior or any kind of green champion. I've never been driven by ideology. I'm a pragmatic person. I'm always willing to learn and I'm always eager to help find solutions.

When I say I'm willing to learn, I would like to just acknowledge a couple of my friends' comments from last night. I want to thank the member for Dartmouth South for her comments about a green economy and what it means to have to green jobs. I learned a little bit from her last night. Thank you. I appreciate that.

I want to acknowledge the member for Sydney-Membertou, who brought attention to those, as we're moving forward into a green economy, those who will be transitioning and that we need to make sure we're looking after them. I thank him for his comments last night.

I learned something from my friend the member for Halifax Atlantic last night too. I learned that someone copied his homework when he was younger an awful lot. (Laughter)

I want to speak tonight, just to be on the record, because I want my children and grandchildren to know that their dad and their granddad stood in this Chamber and was part of passing groundbreaking legislation that would boldly lead Nova Scotia to a greener, more prosperous place full of sustainable prosperity for them.

We have to recognize the problems we face, the seriousness of the times we're in, and set about on an ambitious path to solve those problems. I am proud to stand and support Bill No. 57, the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act, as it does just that. (Applause)

It establishes the goals that will guide our policies, striking the right balance between the necessity for environmental stewardship yet providing great opportunity for Nova Scotia and places like my constituency of Kings West to be leaders in a new green economy.

Mr. Speaker, during the last campaign, even though the environment wasn't a burning topic for discussion with many people in Kings West, the economy certainly was. The need for rural jobs in a sustainable economy will always be a priority to me.

This legislation, I believe, will allow rural parts of Nova Scotia to continue to responsibly develop their primary industries like forestry and agriculture, and also take advantage of newer, greener jobs that will hopefully attract younger people to stay in parts of Nova Scotia, like Kings West.

I also want to recognize the food security part of this legislation. I think it's very important that that is in there for places like Kings West and our agricultural sector, which already grows so much of the food for our province. We've seen over the last 19 months what it means to be potentially food insecure. I just want to thank the minister for making sure that the food security piece was in that.

I have certainly been encouraged over the last few years to meet many more young people that are entering into post-secondary programs around the environment. As we strive to become leaders in a new green economy, I believe we will be able to attract new Nova Scotians who will want to move here from not only parts of Canada but all over the world.

I'm also encouraged that this bill ensures no one will be left behind as we move forward. I'm happy that this House worked together last night to ensure that voices from various communities, like African Nova Scotian and Indigenous communities, will have a voice at the table. For places like the Annapolis Valley First Nation in my riding, that will send a strong, positive message.

Mr. Speaker, the environment is not partisan yet sometimes these discussions become partisan in nature and overly political. Sometimes governments campaign one way and govern another.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy that this bill builds on previous governments' actions and especially I'd like to mention my friend, the honourable Mark Parent, the former member for Kings North, who in the late 2000s crafted the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, recognized at the time as a groundbreaking piece of legislation. It is a framework for subsequent governments in how they work towards economic sustainability and environmental stewardship. That's not homework copying, that's building on previous governments.

I totally believe in the private sector-government partnership approach that we need to have as we implement the goals of this bill. I'd like to just tell a story from yesterday. I had the privilege, Mr. Speaker, of attending an official launch for the Town of Berwick that was implementing innovative smart grid projects with a combination of private sector and government support. I'd just like to read, if I could, the goal laid out for that project:

“The ultimate goal of the Alba Nova pilot project is to increase Berwick Electric’s capacity to take on more renewable energy generation, reduce grid demand through peak shaving and to ramp up energy efficiency while driving down greenhouse gas emissions in the Town of Berwick.”

Mr. Speaker, if I need to table that, I can do that. It's projects like this that are very encouraging and they send a signal to how we and this bill can help us move forward. This bill will help address and we can be part of more projects like this one in Berwick.

I've gotten great feedback from many in my constituency who appreciate the spirit and the intent of Bill No. 57. The guidelines laid out I believe responsibly allow us to transition to cleaner energy and opportunities like we see in Berwick.

I would like to congratulate my friend, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, on this bill. I want to thank him and all who put this together for including the accountability part of this bill. Transparency and accountability are things voters in Kings West spoke to me about a lot in the campaign and regular updates as to where we are in our goals going forward is so important and refreshing.

To summarize, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 57 is a bold, ambitious plan to set Nova Scotia up as a leader in greenhouse gas reductions, as well as a leader in a green economy that will come about. I am thankful this bill gives a voice to and recognizes realities for all parts of Nova Scotia.

This is the type of legislation that Nova Scotians want us to work together on. I am so glad we can set aside our political differences for this bill. I certainly am honoured and humbled to be able to pass Bill No. 57 - legislation that will set Nova Scotia up for the rest of the 21st century and beyond.

The time for knowing and doing nothing is over. So, I'll say that one more time, the time for knowing and doing nothing is over. The time for knowing and taking action is now.

We could have waited until the Spring, Mr. Speaker, and put this off, but it's just another example of what I see in this government: that we're willing to take control of difficult problems and we're looking to make solutions right away.

My colleague from Dartmouth North sort of stole a little bit of my thunder by naming a bunch of names for children. I'm going to do that, too. To my children, Rachel, Molly, Emma, Noah, Chloe, and my grandson Reuben: I want them to know that their dad's working hard with his colleagues to make a better world for them and their children and that by voting for this bill, their dad and papa is going to do just that.

[6:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

TOM TAGGART: Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to stand today in support of this bill. I am so proud of the minister and the government. In my short time in this House, I have sat and watched the Opposition do their job. On everything - everything - they attempt to paint our party as one that does not care about such things as the more vulnerable in our community, that we have no compassion, and nothing is more close to my heart. That we do not care about the environment. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be farther from the truth.

In this case, I wish to speak about the environment. I really appreciate the member for Halifax Atlantic coming back to the House, because I can assure you that I will ramble some through this, but I will also tell you that every word in this is from me and from my heart, not something that a staffer wrote quotes or dug up from a book. This is what I believe in, okay. (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The member for Colchester North has the floor.

TOM TAGGART: The Progressive - and you got that - Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia has a long history of respecting the environment, beginning in 2007, when the Progressive Conservative Party, led by the honourable Rodney Macdonald brought forward the Environmental Goals and Sustainability Act. That was pretty forward-thinking and, I believe, groundbreaking legislation.

That was 14 years ago, Mr. Speaker. Now here we are, the Progressive - and I love that word, “progressive” - Conservative Party of Nova Scotia, presenting another very ambitious and comprehensive piece of legislation that will guide Nova Scotia to a cleaner and more sustainable future.

Mr. Speaker, during my election, as I went door to door, I had one door closed in my face. Before anybody snickers here, I’ll suggest they look at the results in Colchester North. Regardless, the lady said that she just could not force herself to vote for a Party that did not believe in climate change. I just walked away. At another home I visited, a gentleman very politely told me the same thing. I responded by telling him that if he really wanted to check my record, he would realize that I was actually the greenest candidate in our constituency.

I went on to explain the on-the-record actions that I had taken with respect to climate change. I chaired the committee that was very controversial that ensured that our municipality did not release treated fracking waste water into the Bay of Fundy. I championed and was a leader - and this can be fact-checked - that established the very successful Solar Colchester program. I have been a member of the Carbon-Free Colchester committee. I chaired the committee that developed what was at the time the most comprehensive wind turbine bylaws. I sat as a board member of Divert Nova Scotia, vice-chair for four years of the provincial solid waste committee, Chairs Committee - which, by the way, had a very good and I think very productive relationship with the Leader of the Official Opposition when he was Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and I’ll touch on that in a little bit. I could go on.

Again, I am so proud of this government and this bill. I wish to speak briefly with respect to one of the portions of the bill that is dear to my heart, and that is expanding extended producer responsibility, something that, for some reason that I honestly cannot understand, the previous government was reluctant to do. Mr. Speaker, extended producer responsibility is, if I’m not mistaken, the top priority of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities. It will save municipalities and in turn municipal taxpayers a minimum of \$17 million annually.

Ironically, much of that \$17 million is money that the consumer is really paying twice. They pay the municipality to pick up and recycle the product, all the while paying an end-user fee at the grocery store. An example of that is when you buy a box of Corn Flakes. Part of that price would include a fee that is collected by the store wholesaler and submitted to the Canadian Stewardship Services Alliance, which in turn was mandated to use that money to ensure that they cover the cost of final end-use of the product. That money was being collected nationally, but without Nova Scotia participating in this program, the money was used in other jurisdictions or other provinces.

Most other provinces in Canada currently operate under some form of the extended producer model. Given that Nova Scotians are national leaders in the solid waste industry

- I'm going to digress here just for a minute. Over the past six years or more, I have had a lot of opportunity to travel across Canada to different municipalities. Every time I went to another municipality for what was an FCM meeting, I always took the opportunity to go to their landfill sites or their recycling facilities or whatever they are, and everybody always bragged about how great their system was. I can tell you that, while all governments have been represented, none of them ever came close to where we are here in Nova Scotia. I think that's an important point. That's my first little stab at digressing. (Interruption) I'll talk about those targets if you want.

Given that Nova Scotians are national leaders in the solid waste industry, imagine how we can engage support and expand this very important program and find additional ways and new products to recycle, reuse, and reduce the amount of material that ends up in our landfills across this beautiful province. Those were my prepared remarks.

I had the privilege of sitting in the Law Amendments Committee - not during the whole time, mind you. I listened intently to what people had to say. A lot of it I thought was very good - no question - but I want to comment, because this is really dear to my heart. I will try not to ramble too much on this one. In the Lahey report and forestry, and I hear it all the time, especially from some members across here, we hear about clear-cutting. I don't want to use the word, but it certainly upsets me when I hear all this negative talk. My honourable friend from Clare talked about how important the fishing industry was and is to his community. That's how important the forestry industry is to my community. When I hear people try and paint this black picture of a bunch of people that have no regard whatsoever for the forestry, it is so far from the truth, it is unbelievable. I just want to speak about that just a little bit.

Trust me, they were talking from the heart just the same as I am. I just don't think they fully understand it, but anyway, that's just my opinion. I have a different view. I have to tell you that I have been poking around in the woods for well over 50 years. I have most certainly viewed some of the mass destruction that people like other members like to talk about. There's no question about that. I have to tell you, it's my view or my opinion or experience that over the last 30 years, slowly we began to understand forest management.

I could take you to some of the most beautiful carbon sequestering stands of black spruce you have ever seen that are on lands that were clear-cut and managed - thinned and managed - for the last 30 years and they are beautiful stands of wood. They are healthy and they are truly sequestering carbon. They're not old and dying. They were managed.

Mr. Speaker, the private woodlot owners, which I'm one of, care very deeply about their land. Most of us have land that has been handed down through generations to families. I can tell you that my personal story about how our grandfather gave our parents all land and it just keeps coming down. It will always remain in the family.

I can tell you this: When I grew up, every time anybody needed money, whatever it was for, to put a down payment on a house or whether someone was sick or whatever was needed, we went to the woods and we cut three or four loads of logs on the best parts of those stands and that regrowth was just unbelievable.

On that same lot that I own today, there was a lot of trash on it. I clear-cut it and it's the best thing I ever did to it. I told the contractor that cut that lot that I didn't want anything left laying on the ground. I wanted that cleaned off. I didn't want anything rotting and decaying and creating carbon.

Then I wanted it to be either replanted or renewed by silviculture so that I could ensure that my children had that same quality of forest land that I was given by my grandfather. I am confident that that's what will happen. I need to paint that picture the same way that others paint the picture of us folks just destroying the forest with the terrible work we do.

That's one point I wanted to make.

Another point that I want to make that was brought up last night in this House was that other parties had done all the work; that the honourable minister just took this off somebody's desk and presented it here today. I want to comment about a part of that once we get to it. The only part I really know about is the municipal solid waste and the extended producer responsibility.

Comments last evening from a member of the Opposition that EPRs should begin immediately - clearly, they do not understand the complexities of this. Mr. Speaker, back when the member of the Opposition was the Minister of Environment - I think four years ago - once again, I want to say that I truly appreciated and respected the direction and the work that the honourable member did on the environment.

With respect to the extended producer responsibility, the minister - and I'm not sure about the original letter, it may have come from the minister previous - said that they wanted two things before they would move with the EPR. First, they wanted full approval of the Federation of Nova Scotia Municipalities, which we got. Then secondly, they wanted us to do an efficiency study.

That went back to the chairs - myself and Mayor McDougall from CBRM chaired that committee. We hired a consultant and with funding from the government, reported on the provincial solid waste system. That study was completed and presented to the minister, whoever it was at the time. I will note that it was kind of musical chairs in that department in the last four years. I think there were four different ministers in four years.

[6:30 p.m.]

Anyway, regardless of that, there's two points I want to make. If the work was - I apologize here, but this means a lot to me.

I guess where I'm going with this is that the report from the efficiency committee was that - and it was no surprise to anybody - that Nova Scotia, even though we are and I think will be for some time, leaders in the solid waste industry - we're inefficient. Terribly inefficient, and it was costing the municipalities a tremendous amount of money.

Why were we inefficient? We were inefficient because some time in the late 1990s, and I don't know for sure what government it was, but they rightly said that we had to close the old dumps that were burning garbage and polluting the air. They would no longer permit it and here are the rules. You municipalities go out and do it. They made the rules - the government of the day, whichever one it was made the rules - and told 50 municipalities, this is what you've got to do, you figure it out. What that created was a very, very, very inefficient system.

My point I want to make there is that whoever it was last night that said, EPR, don't delay it, bring it in right now - well, I've got to tell you something. Sometimes you've got to be careful what you wish for because when you rush into these things, you really don't get it done right. That's the point I wanted to make on that.

I think I'm done talking here, except for I want to make one quick mention about the food security that is mentioned in this bill. I think, and I'm not positive of this number, but I believe that you'll come to find out that only 7 per cent of the food we eat here in Nova Scotia is produced in Nova Scotia. We need to, within these environmental regulations, we need to ensure that we do not tie the hands of our farmers. When we do that, all we do is ensure that the food we eat in this province comes from some place like Mexico, or tomatoes from China or wherever, India or wherever, where there are no - any kind of environmental regulations, any kind of pesticides or herbicides, or unregulated industries. We need to make sure that when we bring in any kind of environmental management legislation, that it does not tie the hands of our agriculture communities.

That's all I've got to say. I apologize for rambling. Once again, I am truly appreciative of what this government and this minister have done to bring this legislation forward, that has been sitting in other places, on other ministers' desks for the past - whatever - four or eight years. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: How long do I get, Mr. Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: Three and a half minutes. (Laughter) No.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I have a hard time telling time, so that sounds like 60 minutes to me.

I want to start by saying thank you to the minister for bringing this forward. I did joke around, or I did make a comment last night that he was copying homework. It was kind of tongue-in-cheek about him being a teacher and stuff, but, truly, I think the member and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change will say that there was a lot of work done beforehand, and he's mentioned that.

We've all stood here and talked about the passion and the hard work that started with the member for Timberlea-Prospect when he was a minister, on to when he was the Premier of this province. I will say there's a whole host of reasons why I supported the member for Timberlea-Prospect for Leader of this Party, to be someone whom I believe is straightforward and honest, has great morals. We sat down - and I've known him for a long time - and the environment and equity and child care were three of the biggest things that we sat down and talked about, and the passion that shone through.

For those of us who have been around for a while - I think we know that with him. I don't think anyone on that opposite side or on this side here that's been here for a long time has ever had a bad run-in with him or any kind of negative comments.

I am just trying to butter him up because he's having a baby, probably tonight, and this will be the last pleasant thing he hears for awhile, anyway. There's going to be a lot of crying. I'm going to get this on - there is going to be a lot of crying and a lot of pooping, Mr. Speaker, and that's all I'm saying, from the baby.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Would the honourable member speak to the bill.
(Laughter)

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Back to the bill. So, I was going to say that when it comes to the baby, you know, cloth diapers are a great option. I used cloth diapers for all three children, right. Great job. It's good for the environment.

I know that I think the member for Dartmouth East knows me well enough now - we've been on enough committees - I do think this is a passion of his and I do appreciate all the hard work. Obviously, there is some stuff that we would like to see here.

I always get a little flustered no matter the colour of the government when I see these large timelines and I know that was brought up in Law Amendments and I'm not putting that on - it's painful - the Progressive Conservatives. I'm being nice. I'm being nice tonight. (Applause) I'm not putting it on the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, but we did hear some of that from Law Amendments, that these timelines are troubling.

People would like to see it shorter, but we also have to be realistic when it comes to how quickly we can transform our economy. This is what it really is all about. It is going to be very difficult - it's going to take a lot of backbone. It's going to take a lot of gumption, I guess, to really transform our economies off carbon base and oil to a green economy.

There are going to be a lot of people pushing and pulling and there are going to be a lot of special interests, obviously, and rightfully so, that have a lot of vested interest in this. I do want to say before I sit down, and I am going to sit down real soon, it's been a long week and even though I'm one of the lucky members that are in the HRM, I do miss putting my kids to bed at night. So it gets difficult being in here knowing that my babies are going to bed without me. Yeah, we all know that as parents. It's tough - I do want to say that this is a good bill. We are obviously going to support it.

I really do hope that knowing some of the members the way I know them, I hope that when this committee is struck, and you are looking at changes to the bill or what you need to put into it, that you do have the proper representation. You know, we talk about Indigenous and African Nova Scotian consultations, but I think we need women on that committee. We need representation from the LGBTQI. I think we need to have people on there that view the world a little different than - or have had different experiences - than us.

What's that? (Interruption) So I do think it is one of those rare occasions where we are all - I don't know how many we've seen on our side when we were in government, but it is one of those rare occasions where, I think, we are all going to vote yes on this one. I applaud the minister and I look forward to seeing what the future will hold.

I just will remind him, the member for Dartmouth East, I know he is a loving father. He talks about his children quite a lot and we've had lots of conversations about our kids. I just think he needs, when the rubber hits the road, as they say, and I don't know how many more of these terms or analogies I can use, but when you are doing these things, again there is going to be pressure on you from all around and you need to - and I know you will - remember that this bill isn't so much about us, but it is about our children.

So with that Mr. Speaker, I thank you and thank all of you. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I wasn't going to speak on third reading, but I think I ought to respond. I spoke on second reading and I brought in some amendments in Committee of the Whole House on Bills, but I do want to set a bit of the record straight, because there were some comments on my time when I was Environment Minister back in 2017. I remember those days fondly and the great group that works very hard in Environment and Climate Change and deserves a lot of credit on the work that went into this bill.

That was a busy time for the Department of Environment, a very busy time in 2017, leading up to the Northern Pulp application coming through and our commitment to close Boat Harbour - something that all parties, including our own, made promises to do in the past and needed to close down that facility once and for all - the biggest example of environmental racism we had in our province. I was committed to working and putting all my energy into ensuring that that took place.

We also had the issue of carbon pricing. I brought in cap and trade. That's \$50 million a year that that government can now use and start putting into initiatives that are in this bill, Mr. Speaker, and that government, that was then Opposition, opposed that initiative.

We brought in the first dedicated prosecutor who would take on companies that were harming the environment, and all the things that had to do with the Environment Act. We brought in a Coastal Protection Act and I launched consultations on that. We started to ban plastics.

We signed on and I went to Germany, actually, in COP23, with some staff from Environment - one staff. We actually worked with different provinces and places in the Americas and signed on to an agreement with carbon pricing for the Americas. That is what is being spoken about today at COP26 - a very important initiative that Canada is leading on.

Then we went on to bring in incentives for electric vehicles. Now this party has targets in their bill looking at electric vehicle percentages, but the whole time they were in Opposition, the main targets and the main talking point, buzzwords that they used against us, especially my government as Premier, is that we were interested in electric vehicles and dogs on patios. How things can change, Mr. Speaker.

We know they sent letters out to rural communities especially, targeting the money that was spent on the Art Gallery and on electric vehicle incentives, trying to pit one end of the province, one region of the province, against another.

That's the politics of division that was very popular under Harper Conservatives, and they wonder why Nova Scotians call them Conservatives. It's very peculiar to me that they think they have such a disagreement when people call them Conservatives when it's in their party's name - Progressive Conservatives. It just doesn't make sense to me. I don't think New Democrats are offended by being called democrats.

The fact that members have to get up tonight and say they believe in climate change, the fact they have to say that, I think, should say something about their party and where they came from and the things they argued about in this House. We don't have to say that.

We know they have their constitution and agreement to work alongside the federal Conservative Party and to co-operate with the Conservative Party of Canada, who has had struggles and waffled on the climate change issue and whether it is caused by humans. We know that, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

IAIN RANKIN: But back to the member for Colchester North. I know he did good work as a solid waste member, and I met with councillors during my time in 2017 that he referenced. The reality is, when the municipalities came to me when I was minister, there was no consensus on paper and packaging and the model to use to implement in this province. That's what we asked for: for them to go back to UNSM at the time, to find a consensus on the model.

[6:45 p.m.]

While we waited - this was when I was in Environment; I won't speak to other Environment Ministers - we brought out and expanded out extended producer responsibility for used oil and antifreeze, and we had EPR in place at the time. Then when I became Premier, it went into mandate letters to implement paper and packaging with EPR. Just because you have it in law now doesn't mean that it is implemented any sooner, Mr. Speaker. That was a commitment that we had made.

So in terms of if this legislation actually increases ambition for the province, it does not. The greenhouse gas emission target is the same: 53 per cent below 2005 levels. The net-zero year is the same, 2050. The renewable energy target that we put in regulation, Mr. Speaker, is the same, 80 per cent renewable energy by 2030.

All it has is new goals for other categories. That is a result of consultation that we launched earlier this year that concluded during the writ period. The only question is whether or not we would have had the exact same goals. I think if you look at the amendments that we put forward last evening, we would have had stronger goals and interim targets on efficiency, on solid waste, on advancement of ecological forestry, on conservation, and on electrification. Those are the things that we would have had in regulation.

I would like to congratulate the minister on bringing this bill forward. It is a good bill. It is a step in the right direction. A lot of the work did take place before he was there, but he is showing leadership by bringing this bill forward. He's showing some courage bringing this bill forward. For that, I commend him, and we'll support the bill.

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

The honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

HON. TIM HALMAN: I sincerely want to thank my colleagues in this Chamber for their thoughtful analysis, the points that they have raised. We have dynamic, robust, passionate discussions in this Chamber, as we should. As colleagues have indicated in this session, this is the People's House. Mr. Speaker, the bill before us, Bill No. 57, I think we would all agree, belongs to the people of Nova Scotia.

I think we all agree as well - and for those of us who have had the privilege of working with Nova Scotia public servants, with the civil service here in Nova Scotia, just how professional and hard-working the civil service of Nova Scotia is. Like my colleagues, I want to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication and talent of the staff at the Department of Environment and Climate Change who were able to put this bill together, I think, in record time - phenomenal work that was done - along with the amazing consultations that were completed by the Clean Foundation.

Those public consultations, completed between May and July of this year, saw 1,300 submissions, 5,600 ideas submitted, the utilization of a very novel and sophisticated way of ensuring marginalized voices are captured through the use of micro-grants. I know all of us commend Scott Skinner and all the staff at the Clean Foundation for the outstanding work that they did in public consultations.

Mr. Speaker, I know that despite our political differences, I know that despite the policy divisions we may have at times, I know each and every one of us in this Chamber wants a cleaner, more sustainable Nova Scotia for our children and grandchildren. I want members to know that we were pleased on the government side, yesterday, to vote for the amendments put forward by the honourable member for Cole Harbour and by the honourable member for Halifax Needham. Bill No. 57 is a stronger bill as a result of those amendments.

I also want to take a few moments to speak to some of the suggestions for improvements that did not make it into the bill. We received thoughtful input during these debates. We received thoughtful input at the Law Amendments Committee. I want each of those presenters to know, and I want all Nova Scotians to know and be assured that the government is listening. We have heard you, and the level of action Nova Scotians are looking for will be coming in the climate change plan for clean growth and in the individual department action plans to achieve the 28 goals set out in Bill No. 57.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that we are at a pivotal moment in human history. As Richard Attenborough had said, we are at the tipping point. Let's not lose the greater context of the moment.

Today our debate in this Legislature coincides with COP26, the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland. Global leaders are working together on a coordinated response to climate change. That is the most pressing issue facing our planet, our people, and our livelihoods.

Nova Scotia is not at the conference this year. I made the decision, Mr. Speaker, to stay here. I felt it was more important to work with my colleagues to steward this bill through the Legislature. This bill, I believe, will set Nova Scotia up for some very clear targets for the decade and beyond. Besides, if I had gone to Glasgow, Scotland, I would have missed all the fun with my friends in the Opposition.

I want Nova Scotians to know that of the discussions that have taken place, we have taken detailed notes. I want Nova Scotians to know that we support ambitious national and international action on decarbonizing the planet and addressing the climate crisis. We share this planet with 7.5 billion other people. Global collaboration is imperative if we are to remove the threat of climate change.

Nova Scotia may be small geographically, but our commitment and our will to act on climate change is equal to that of some of the largest countries. We are acting with resolve to reduce our global emissions by 2030 and to reach net-zero by 2050. We want to make life better for Nova Scotians.

I believe Nova Scotians want to do their part to be responsible global citizens and good stewards of the environment. We know we're already experiencing the effects of climate change in Nova Scotia - we just have to look at the extreme heat warnings, the warmer winters, the rising tides, and the impact that this has on all of us. The impacts that it has on our seniors, our farmers, our food supply. And the impact that it's having on our youth. Many of us in this Chamber are familiar with the term "climate anxiety". We have a responsibility to make sure our youth feel as though they know and have the assurance that we are going to be leaving things better for the next generation than we found it.

They feel as though the social contract has been broken. That unwritten social contract that the older, more senior generation has a responsibility to leave it better. That's on all of us, Mr. Speaker. I believe Bill No. 57 will set the foundation for us to correct that course and to assure our young Nova Scotians that we are taking action.

Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity here to set the course so all Nova Scotians can enjoy a better quality of life and the benefits of being leaders in sustainability and the clean economy. I believe we're doing that.

It's not perfect, I acknowledge that, but it sets a very strong foundation, and it sets a path of certainty to know what we are striving for. We have set targets that are challenging but attainable so that we can be successful. They are challenging; they are bold; and they are achievable - and that is very important.

Some have suggested we should go further than a 53 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. Maybe we will. This is a floor, not a ceiling. What I mean by that is, this is a foundational piece in that the fundamental details will be coming forward in the months ahead.

At 53 per cent, we have the strongest greenhouse gas emission targets in the country. Our goal is based on the reductions needed to keep global temperature rise to between 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius. We developed our emission target based on science and the recommendation by the International Panel on Climate Change.

Nations signed on to the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at the 21st Conference of the Parties in 2015. This agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. It informs Canada's commitments which in turn guide the development of the targets here in Nova Scotia.

There has been a lot of talk of timelines. I want members of this House to know I'm conscious of that. Having attended university in the 90s and having followed the 1997 Kyoto Accord and the commitments by various jurisdictions that weren't honoured, I understand, and I know many of my colleagues in this Chamber understand the commitments and timelines that haven't been met over the years. That's why I say it's on us, it's on all of us. That's why this bill belongs to Nova Scotians. We all have a collective responsibility in attaining these targets.

Our climate plan for clean growth coming in the Spring will detail how we will achieve our climate change-related goals. We'll provide annual reporting on progress for openness and transparency, and most importantly accountability. These are broad goals. The heavy lifting on many of these goals will be the responsibility of departments from across government. To my colleagues, we have a lot of work to do, make no mistake, a lot of work is ahead of us. They are going to require collaboration with business, educational institutions, industry associations, not-for-profits, and all Nova Scotians.

My point is that this legislation is Step 1. A very important step, but just the beginning. What we have with this bill is a strong foundation upon which to build the path to 2030 and beyond, and the hard work of developing the policy, programs, and regulations to achieve these 28 goals starts now. I want to thank the over 30 presenters that came to Law Amendments Committee who spoke with passion, spoke with courage, spoke with intelligence and heart.

This province is in good hands. We have organizations, we have individuals who care deeply about the environment, who care deeply about mitigating and adapting to climate change. This government wants to hear from them, and we encourage ongoing dialogue and discussion, and I want all stakeholders to know that the ideas expressed at Law Amendments, the ideas that will continue to be expressed by my colleagues here in this House, will be considered as we develop that climate change plan.

It's clear Nova Scotians care deeply about our environment. They want swift action to address climate change. They want to transition to a cleaner and healthier environment. This legislation is that road map to guide us for over the next 10 years.

I want to ensure the presenters, the members opposite as well, and all Nova Scotians that we will consider the feedback as we develop that climate change plan. We all have work to do across government, across sectors, across industries, across communities, and in our homes.

We want to also signal to our municipal partners that they are fundamental in addressing climate change. The municipalities have a very large role to play, and we're listening to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities when they say the current method of recycling printed paper and plastics is a burden on them. I can assure the municipalities that I will be consulting with them. Industry should be responsible for end-of-life management of the goods they produce. That is why extended producer responsibility will be expanded as part of our goal to encourage the growth of a circular economy.

My daughter Sophie once said to me when I took her to Toys "R" Us to get something, about all the plastic that's on the toys: Dad, this is just obscene. We need to end this. This is all part of reaching our solid waste disposal goal of no more than 300 kilograms per person per year by 2030. Nova Scotians will continue to be involved in planning around how we achieve the goals in this legislation.

[7:00 p.m.]

Again, this is the first step, not the end of the road. A tremendous amount of work is before us. We all must work together to ensure that Nova Scotians have equitable access to a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment, as well as equal protection from environmental harm. I look forward to working with my cabinet colleagues and my colleagues in the Opposition. Conversations have already started, and I encourage ongoing conversation as we work together to develop that climate change plan.

I want to signal to members of this House that the Department of Environment and Climate Change has already reached out to the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism to initiate conversations about how to create funding for climate change action and support for community-based solutions and policy engagement with communities that are racialized and marginalized.

Of course, as we have a new committee formed from this House, ongoing discussions will be taking place in a formal manner. I want to let my colleagues know that those conversations are going to be encouraged and I have no doubt we will be having some very powerful conversations in the weeks and months ahead.

These conversations will help us work towards climate action that includes and equitably benefits communities who are racialized and marginalized. Equity begins by recognizing an imbalance in fairness and justice and in coming to the table to listen and build genuine relationships. I want to signal to my colleagues that is something I know that is so critical in building those relationships. In order to do that we have to spend time with

each other. I know we will challenge each other, but I think we'd all agree that we maximize the best public policy when we challenge each other.

We want to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to benefit from the work we do together on climate change. We know that vulnerability to climate change can overlap with other social vulnerabilities, such as poverty, racism and sexism. We must do more to remove those barriers.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, you can tell I am eager to get to work. I've learned in my life the reward for hard work is simply more hard work. I am ready, I know my colleagues are ready and very enthusiastic to get to work on these goals.

Our path to clean energy will transform the energy market, create jobs and economic opportunities for Nova Scotians and help to attract new citizens to live and work here. All Nova Scotians will benefit from the cleaning of our economy, addressing the climate crisis and sustainable prosperity.

Getting off coal is something we have to do. This is recognized globally, as coal plants are among our biggest emitters. We can't afford not to move in this direction. What we have to do, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure workers and communities are made a priority to ensure that they are supported during this transition.

This is especially important where there are coal plants and this has been raised during this session. The people who work there and the surrounding communities need to be treated fairly and help is part of this transition. This means ensuring that their skills can be used in other jobs, helping with retraining for opportunities in the clean economy and respecting and honouring the work they are currently doing. I want all members to know that the government is in conversations with Nova Scotia Power and the federal government to ensure that just transition happens.

Mr. Speaker, we are creating a cleaner future for the next generation and all Nova Scotians can be proud of that. They can be proud that we are leaders in adopting and achieving bold environmental goals. Our actions today will ensure that tomorrow will be better. I believe this piece of legislation belongs to all Nova Scotians. As I said before, Nova Scotians will be watching us closely. We have a wonderful opportunity for us to make our children and grandchildren proud and do what needs to be done to secure the future for the next generation.

I want to thank all members of this House for your support on this bill. I want to thank you for fulfilling your function as an Opposition to question and challenge. I want you to know that it is something I deeply appreciate, having served in the Opposition, knowing how critical that function is to a democracy. I want you to know what was articulated at the Law Amendments Committee, what was articulated last night, it is not

lost on me. Many of you here know me personally and you know that I genuinely want to work with you to ensure a brighter future for our kids and grandkids.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe Bill No. 57 puts us on the right path to the brighter future that all Nova Scotians want and deserve. With those few words I close debate on third reading of Bill No. 57.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 57.

A recorded vote has been requested. We will ring the bells until the Whips are satisfied.

[7:05 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Clerk will conduct a recorded vote.

[The Clerk called the roll.]

[7:14 p.m.]

YEAS

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

THE CLERK: For, 50. Against, 0. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

ALI DUALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, members of the House. Thank you, all Nova Scotians. It's my honour to be with you here tonight and take this golden opportunity - as I've been told, it's a lifetime opportunity - to stand in one of the oldest institutions in this land and to Address in Reply.

I would like to thank all the families who allow the members of this House away from their families and drive four hours, three hours to serve the public, to serve public good.

I'm sure sometimes people wonder, when they see on the TV screen, what we do here. I assure you; we have procedures that we have to follow, and that's why we sit in this House six hours. Trust me, we do good things. (Applause) That's why you sent us here.

I'm here, first of all, to let you know who I am as a person. Secondly, what brought me here in this House, and to share with you what I envision, what I would like to see in this House and the future of Nova Scotia.

My name is Ali Ibrahim Duale Ahmed Farah Adan Siyad Egal Samatar Siyad Hussein. I can keep going on. (Laughter) Believe it or not, I don't have any paper that I have to recite these names. They sit in my heart, and that's the pure of lineage. I can continue this, but I don't have time here tonight.

That lineage and that heritage is something that makes me who I am. At the same time, it's something that I regret. What I mean by that is I left my homeland, my people, and everything that I knew as a child because of civil war. That civil war was based on one thing, tribalism. We could not agree with one another how to live side by side. We have been killing and chasing each other for 30 years until we speak today right here.

I'm one of the lucky ones. Part of this House is that we can actually argue. (Applause) You know the funny thing? Go to the cafeteria and have a coffee. Isn't that amazing? That's amazing. That is amazing.

I'm a child of a disabled mother that I didn't have a chance to be with and to see her love and care. I'm not sure how old I was when I was taken away from my family. Governments never did it for me. My own father did that, which I questioned after I became

a father and saw the relationship between me and my children, to see the love and the care of the family. I ask myself, why? I was not the oldest child, nor was I the youngest. At the same time, my father is not on this Earth with us today. I'm grateful for what he did to me. It's a very conflicting feeling.

I hope my family are not watching tonight, standing here and sharing my personal story, because I was so reluctant to do so, for two reasons. Each one of us sitting here tonight has a story, a unique story that none of us shares with each other. Why is mine different? Because of that reason I was reluctant to share my story for people. I always have that conclusion. I was reluctant to share my story as most immigrants have done it historically, to not share with my kids my pain and my suffering and what I have endured to become a father.

I reached that conclusion to share my story last Winter, and it came as a surprise to me. People who knew me, that I share pieces of my story with, encouraged me and told me I have to write a book. I was reluctant to because of these two reasons, but I changed my mind last Winter. One of the reasons was that I personally felt any story that wanted to be told, any story that you can tell another human being that would have an effect in a good way is worthwhile to tell.

I was also that conflicted that if I tell somebody my story, will it change that person's life for the better? I got a phone call last Winter from someone in Ottawa that did a lot of research about me and made a lot of effort of how to connect to me through my fire service. After a long discussion, she told me the reason she was looking for me. She said, I have a class of immigrant kids from all over the world. She said these kids, all of them have gone through a lot of trauma and difficulties and hardships and I couldn't find anybody that can relate to their lives and their experiences. To show anybody, you can do this and here is an example.

Because of COVID-19, I wasn't able to travel to Ottawa. We did a Zoom meeting with the class. We had a good time. It was actually one of my hardest interviews or the questions that I've come across. You know kids are very honest and sometimes they ask hard questions, and they did. After that, they made me a small booklet that they sent me, and, boy, I felt I had an impact. And I said, boy, this is a story that is worthwhile to tell.

That's why I'm here today with this courage. That's why I say I hope my kids are not watching, because I made that decision to write down my story. Hopefully this House will be one of the people that I will share with once I decide, when I make that decision to produce that book of my life.

I come from one of the most unique constituencies in this province, Halifax Armdale. Armdale takes its name from the estate of Sir Charles Tupper, 1821-1915, former Premier of Nova Scotia. That's who this seat belongs to. It's right there. This is the history

of the seat, a Premier and the Prime Minister of Canada. On July 1, 1917, the citizens of the area named it Armdale.

[7:30 p.m.]

We have one of the best lakes, Chocolate Lake. That takes its name from the chocolate factory that was built along its shore. The stream that infills the lake was used as early as 1786 by John Hosterman - I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing it properly - for the grist mill. It was used by industry for many years after that.

In 1847, Andrew Downs started the first zoological garden in North America. This zoo was visited by the Prince of Wales and many other dignitaries. This is Halifax Armdale. This is the history of Armdale.

Sir Sandford Fleming Park was deeded to the city by Sir Sandford Fleming, who devised standard time. The Dingle Tower in the park was built between 1908 and 1912 at the suggestion of Sir Sandford Fleming to recognize 150 years of representative government in Nova Scotia.

We have Melville Island. We also have the Ashburn golf course. The property was sold to the Halifax Golf and Country Club in 1922. The clubhouse opened on May 10, 1924. The clubhouse suffered severe damage with the Bedford Magazine explosion in 1947.

The Halifax Armdale Rotary was built in 1969. This roundabout has five different roads. In 2016, it had an estimated 50,000 cars a day. Those of you who are not from here in Halifax, I urge you to go to that roundabout and just drive around. If you haven't done that, you haven't been in Halifax.

One of the unique things in this constituency of Halifax Armdale is we have one of the Canadian iconic coffee shop that we call Tim Hortons. Halifax Armdale has the first in Halifax, Nova Scotia - it was started in 1995 and is still operating as we speak today.

These are the short notes of the constituency that elected me, that I speak for, why I'm here. I'm grateful for that. I could not make sure, I could not speak here but I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful for the volunteers, I'm grateful for the Leader of the Opposition who encouraged me to run. I'm grateful for my caucus and the Liberal Party who supported me to run my campaign. I'm grateful to the people of Nova Scotia.

My story is not my story, it's the story of Nova Scotians. This land offered me a place of refuge. Not only that, this land allowed me to succeed, allowed me to be here with you today.

I'm here to serve them. I'm here to serve my constituents, I'm here to serve the people of Nova Scotia. As much as I am happy to be here and take this opportunity but also, I am mindful the members of this House have been sitting here since one o'clock. I thank the Speaker, who has been generous for my time to speak to this House but also, I am told I have one hour here. And that's entitlement.

This is who I am, this is how I get here. What I hope is to see this House united, to see this House be the People's House. We have that courage. We could do it. I saw members of the other side of the aisle, and I listened to you. I listened to you, what you have gone through, I listened to you how this institution functions, whether that's right or wrong. I encourage you, look to the horizon.

The decisions we make in this House, people die for. The decisions we make in this House, people lost their jobs. The decisions we make in this House, people lost their families. The seat doesn't belong, none of us, it belongs to July 15th, and I mean it because none of us know who will be here July 16th. I'm going to remind you of that. But we're here right now and what matters is what we do here today.

My fellow Nova Scotians, you are the ones who made that choice. We are here for you. We'll do our best, we'll serve you, trust us. One of the things when I ran my campaign that I was reluctant and that I was also refusing - was for people to call me a politician. I'm not a politician. I'm a servant for the people of Nova Scotia and for the people of Halifax Armdale. (Applause) I'm here for my constituents.

One of the biggest issues that I've been addressing during my campaign was a school, École John W. MacLeod-Fleming Tower Elementary School. This school was built in 1947. I attended the first day of the opening of the school to welcome the children and the parents. I listened to their concerns, and I saw with my own eyes the condition and the status of the school.

This Address in Reply, my response, I have mixed feelings. I do acknowledge this government was elected for the health care. I committed to do whatever it takes to help you to achieve that goal. It's not an issue of a Liberal, Conservative, or NDP. We can claim anything to Nova Scotians.

Also, I was disappointed to see that Throne Speech had little to do with the future of our children. For the next generation that will take over this torch, that will lead this land in the future. I hope the Premier and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development will take this seriously, have a second look, and address this issue - to look at what our future should look like and who is responsible. I ask you and I trust you. That's our goal.

I thank you. I'm humble to be part of this House - the People's House. Thank you.
(Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Shelburne.

NOLAN YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in the House today representing the residents of Shelburne County to respond to the Speech from the Throne.

First, I would like to extend congratulations to all the newly elected and re-elected members of the 64th House of Assembly. I would also wish to thank all those who cared enough about the concerns of the residents to let their names stand for election.

[7:45 p.m.]

I especially want to thank those residents who supported me in their bid by putting their faith in my ability to represent their concerns. No election is run or won by one person alone and I want to sincerely thank all those who volunteered and helped in so many ways. I could not have done it without all your help, guidance, and support. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my family, my wife Jennifer, my children Keenan and Rosa, who supported me every step of the way, rarely saw me for the course of the campaign. I couldn't have done it without their support and Keenan and Rosa, I hope you still stay engaged in politics, regardless of what date the election is on. (Laughter)

To my mother, Florence and my brother, Darnell, who called me from Cape Breton every night to encourage me, to support me, and to inquire about my footwear. For the record, I wore out two soles and two pairs of sneakers during the campaign.

As a newly-elected MLA, I will speak just briefly about myself. I was born in Sydney, Cape Breton (Interruption) and I lived in a number of communities growing up, including Yarmouth with my friend and colleague the member for Yarmouth.

After finishing school and before choosing to settle down in the beautiful town of Shelburne to raise a family, my wife and I spent a number of years travelling around the world visiting and living in over 40 countries. This opportunity provided me with a rare opportunity to experience life with many different cultures; an opportunity that I believe has taught me the importance of understanding, acceptance, and learning from others.

Mr. Speaker, my interest in politics stems from watching the news with my grandmother, Elizabeth Smith, Bets, and my first foray in the political world was in 2016, when I ran for municipal council. These four years were extremely important in terms of learning political process - the most important role of representing the concerns of residents, the people who elected us.

Until the 2013 provincial boundary review determined that the riding of Shelburne County should be split in two, for more than 227 years - 97 years before Confederation -

Shelburne County held a seat in the Legislature. I would just like to add that Shelburne, the town, was the fourth largest place in North America in 1783.

In 2018, after extensive meetings and consultations, the provincial Electoral Boundaries Commission recommended the restoration of the riding representing Shelburne County. Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge those who represented our split county: Sterling Belliveau, who was first elected to Queens-Shelburne in 2013, followed by the current member for Queens, elected in 2017, and the current member for Argyle, elected in 2019, a riding previously represented by Chris d'Entremont. Thank you for your service to all of the residents. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Shelburne County is truly one of the most beautiful parts of our province. Shelburne County has miles of stunning, pristine, white, sandy beaches, including the famous Crescent Beach in Lockeport that once graced the \$50 bill, world-famous restaurants, a vibrant arts community that features the Tobetic Wilderness Area, one of the best natural harbours in the world, numerous nature trails, parks, sports, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, and the list goes on.

Located on the beautiful Lighthouse Route, Shelburne County boasts a number of historical landmarks from Bon Portage Lighthouse in Shag Harbour to Sandy Point Lighthouse in the Municipal District of Shelburne. Many museums, including the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre in Birchtown, the Archelaus Smith Museum on Cape Sable Island, the UFO Museum in Shag Harbour, the Shelburne County Museum complex in the Town of Shelburne, the Barrington Woolen Mill, and the Seal Island Light Museum in Barrington, just to name a few of the buildings that house the rich, diverse nature in the history of Shelburne County.

However, the most unique feature of Shelburne County is its residents. Shelburne County boasts a uniquely welcoming, friendly environment and, as a Cape Bretoner, I know this to be true and is the reason why my wife and I chose to raise our family in Shelburne County. (Applause)

Shelburne County has a long history in fishing, shipbuilding, and the forestry and logging industries. Fishing is the primary industry that supports Shelburne County families and our economy today, as well as the many supporting businesses that include, but are not limited to, fish processing plants, boat building shops, gear and bait suppliers, storage freezers, transport and trucking - just to name a few that support this resource in the ocean economy.

The fishery in our province is a \$2.4 billion industry that is not only the backbone of the economy of Shelburne County but plays a significant role in the economy in all of Nova Scotia.

As well, Shelburne County is, by all accounts, the lobster capital of Canada. (Laughter and applause) Some might dispute that, but lobster exports in Nova Scotia are valued at approximately \$1.2 billion dollars; Shelburne County leads in product landings and contributes significantly in tax dollars received by both the provincial and federal governments.

During the Speech from the Throne, issues that are important to all Nova Scotians were addressed with a promise that things will be better. It clearly acknowledged this past election was a referendum on the state of health care. The issues discussed here are exactly as I heard from the residents of Shelburne County - better access to the necessary services.

I knocked on 100 doors and to 100 people, health care is the number one issue. I've heard fear and frustration in not having a doctor, fear of requiring medical attention, and wondering if the ER at Roseway is open, or if there's an ambulance that might be able to take them in time. Frustration about the extremely long wait times at outpatients to simply get a prescription filled because they have no family doctor or nurse practitioner. Frustration in calling the newly-built clinic in Shelburne trying to get an appointment only to hear that there are no appointments available. Our geography dictates Shelburne residents need access to services locally.

Mr. Speaker, our government has made access to health care a priority, and a top priority while working with my colleagues is to ensure that we have the access that we deserve.

At this time, I'd like to thank all the dedicated and extremely hard-working health care professionals who are stressed-out, burnt-out, understaffed, and overworked - doctors, nurse practitioners, LPNs, CCAs, RNs, paramedics, lab techs, and support staff.

Dignity for seniors. Mr. Speaker, in Shelburne County, we have three long-term care facilities - Bay Side in Barrington, Surf Lodge in Lockeport, and Roseway Manor in Shelburne. At each of these homes are dedicated, hard-working staff, many of whom are also stressed-out, burnt-out, understaffed, and overworked.

Additionally, Roseway Manor is in extremely poor physical condition, to the point where I believe it needs to be replaced sooner than later. A number of my colleagues have had past opportunities to visit Roseway Manor and have seen the building's condition. Some have previously spoken about Roseway Manor right here in this House. Roseway Manor is a priority for me and for my constituents and I hope it will be a priority for all my colleagues in the House.

Constituents of Shelburne County are also concerned about the condition of the roads, particularly along Trunk No. 3 from Bear Point to Charlesville. Not only is this link important to connect their communities, it connects their seafood exports to the world.

Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis in rural Nova Scotia is real and needs innovative solutions to streamline development and I am proud of the quick action our government has taken to address the housing crisis. I will continue to work with my colleagues to increase supply and access to housing in Shelburne County. (Applause)

I spoke with many seniors during the campaign, and I've seen first-hand the financial struggles that some are experiencing. The cost of living keeps increasing and somehow seniors on fixed incomes are managing to pay their bills and put food on their tables while helping their children and their grandchildren. Seniors built this country, and they can't be left behind. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my father-in-law, who passed away during the campaign period, David Cadden, "Bree." He was an inventor, he was an artist, he was a mentor, and he was a good man.

I would also like to recognize all the hard-working people in the fishing and coal mining sectors. It's hard work. It's dangerous work. It's long hours to provide for families. I would like to recognize my father, who passed away in a coal mine accident in New Waterford when I was a young man, who would probably be shocked to see me here today.

I would also like to recognize my stepfather, Howard Jones. He was an RCMP officer, and we spent many times debating politics at a young age. Howard has since passed away, but he's part of the reason for my engagement in politics today.

Growing up in New Waterford and being out west and coming back and seeing some of the issues there, there's an opioid crisis in the province, in the country. There are people who have addictions. I encourage anybody who has addictions to reach out. Your life is important.

I'm 41 years old. Of the people I grew up with, the group I hung around with, when I went out west to work and came back, about half the friends I had are deceased now. They got involved with the wrong things. For young people to die in their 30s is a tragedy. I would like to just let that sink in for a second.

In closing, I would like to thank the residents of Shelburne County again for their support. There are many challenges facing our county and our province; however, I have faith that working together and respecting one another, good decisions will be made.

THE SPEAKER: I don't know if it's safe or not, but I'll recognize the honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: We have actually gone away together. I love the Speaker to death. I saw him not too long ago in Cape Breton in a Tim Hortons there. I think

I might have shocked the living bejesus out of you when you walked in the Tim Hortons in Cape Breton and saw my face. Sorry for the scare.

It's been a long time since I actually - the only Address in Reply I have ever done was when I had the privilege to do the original one in 2013, when we first formed government, under Stephen McNeil, then-member for Annapolis. He asked me to reply to the original reply. Last time I actually stepped up and had a speech on the record that was non-partisan or not political. I wanted to take a moment today and just get up and thank some of the people.

I have gotten to know the member for Halifax Armdale quite a bit. We were involved before he ran for politics. Then I had the privilege of knocking on doors with him during the campaign.

[8:15 p.m.]

I have to say, myself and the member for Halifax Armdale, it was early on in the campaign - I don't even know if I should tell this story, but I'm going to. We were on the street. I was knocking on a door, I heard this car go by, and then I heard the brakes slam on. This person jumped out of the car. I'm not going to say names because I bet you a lot of people in this Legislature probably know who this person is if I say the name.

This person comes flying up in my face, was yelling and screaming at me, threatening me, comes running at the car. I think he thought I was going to run. I don't say I'm courageous, I'm probably stupid. I instantly put myself in a position that I thought I was going to get into a fistfight.

The member for Halifax Armdale was a candidate at the time, and I was a candidate. I think his jaw hit the ground when he saw the screaming match I got into, because I wasn't backing down, and I was screaming back at him a little bit. That was one of his first introductions to politics.

You know when we first got here in 2013 - the reason why I wanted to get up and speak - it was actually the member for Shelburne, when he started to speak and I was undecided if I was going to speak or not, and it just kind of hit me that there are a lot of people on that side that we don't know yet and there are a lot of beautiful stories over there and a lot of beautiful stories over here. A lot of times we get caught up in the back and forth and all that stuff. I don't think that myself and the member for Shelburne have ever actually really had a conversation yet, but just ask the member for Dartmouth East. You will find out.

It's a privilege to stand here, and I'll be going on my ninth year, which to me is absolutely dumbfounding because when - I like to tell this story about how in 2012 they were looking for a candidate in Halifax Atlantic, a riding that had never gone Liberal, ever,

not even close. It's has only had four MLAs, in fact, in its history. One was Michelle Raymond, who was NDP, but Michèle Raymond, who was here for 10 years is fantastic. She did an amazing job and I've known Michèle for a long time. Before that was Robert Chisholm, whom some of you may know. Robert was the Leader of the NDP for a long time.

Then there was some guy named John Buchanan. Johnny B. was the MLA from the time the dinosaurs roamed the Earth until the early 1990s. Those who knew John knew that he was like a human magnet. He was an incredible individual and we've all heard him sing the Mira song. I think I've heard him sing it more times than I care to admit.

John was actually - to me he was really nice. He obviously helped campaign against me, but he was also very professional and personal during and after. He once said to me - he was in the grocery store - John was a kid. It was a big thing to see John Buchanan in the grocery store. John would run over to his I.G.A., then he'd run over to the corner and grab a big box of chocolate bars and he'd tear it open. I always thought it was amazing that some guy could just walk into a grocery store and grab whatever he wanted and tear it open. He'd start passing chocolate bars out to kids.

John once said to me - I was in the grocery store and I was with my kids and I was going up the aisle and this was about a year before John got sick - he saw me, and every time he saw me in the grocery store, he would want to stop and talk and we'd take a picture. This day was especially John, he had that extra energy into him and he said, oh my God, it's the MLA from Halifax Atlantic, Brendan Maguire. Some people were looking around and they saw John and John is holding court and a bunch of people came over to talk to us and John said, I want to tell everybody something about Brendan Maguire. They said, what's that? He said, that man is the second-best MLA this community has ever had. I said, will I ever be the first, John? He said, not over my dead body.

It's a unique riding. It's a beautiful riding. I think the reason I thought back to 2013 is because I'm looking over now and I see some really obviously familiar faces, people we've gone through it all with, the class of 2013. There's still a bunch of us here. I think of those who were here before us and those who were with us then. I think of walking into this place and how intimidated I was, and I think of some of the people who really pulled me aside and had conversations with me.

They were people whom some of you would expect. Leo Glavine was certainly one of them. Leo - for those who know Leo, Leo might be the nicest human being you've ever met in your life. I've never seen the man angry or swear, which is incredible, because that's all I do. I think of the late great Gordie Gosse. Gordie found out that I loved boxing and he'd pull me into the corner back there and we'd have conversations and in between talking about boxing he'd give me advice on how to be a good MLA. He'd tell me, it's about the people, Brendan, it's about the people. As long as you make it about the people, nothing else matters.

I actually think of Maureen MacDonald. I used to watch in awe as Maureen would get up. Those of you that were here when Maureen was here, I think you quickly found out there was nothing that threw her off. There was nothing that she was not prepared to talk about, and when she stood up, she was prepared.

I think of some of the personal relationships I had with - some of them were kind of odd because we were so opposite, but I think of myself and Karen Casey. Karen was a mentor to me and someone who - I know. Some of the members are like, what? Karen was almost like a - I don't want to say - Karen would show me how to be a proper politician, how to act, how to present yourself.

Then, of course, I think of Stephen McNeil and so many others. Stephen - I had some obstacles that happened during my time here. One of my best friends died in a car accident and I was pretty upset. Stephen spent about two hours on the phone with me one night, and he was Premier of Nova Scotia. He had lots of stuff to do, and he wouldn't get off the phone with me until he knew I was okay. That says something about the character of the man. (Applause)

Those are the stories. I know we all have stories like that about our colleagues and our leaders, and those who are on the outside looking in don't see that. They don't see that about Stephen, and I'm sure they don't see that about your former Leaders that were here, and the current leaders. It's easy to frame up a picture of what you think somebody is by a couple of sound bites.

There are a lot of people - and, of course, the last person I want to say about the Class of 2013 is the late, great Allan Rowe. Allan was here for about two years, two and a half years, three years. He closed in on a full session, right? It's so long ago. I mean, it feels like so long ago. Alan was the Whip at the time, and I sat next to him. If you think I have energy now, eight years ago I was even more wired. I could not sit still. I just could not sit still, and Allan would grab me by the knee and he'd squeeze and he'd go - I'm not going to tell you what he said, but you could imagine what he'd say.

Allan and I had a unique relationship. When we travelled, we travelled together. I once said to Allan, you don't remember me - and I embarrassed him in the Legislature because I told the story - but I said, you don't remember me, but when I was a kid, I wanted to be you. He was like, first of all, how old are you? And I said, when I lived at Phoenix House, one of the things they used to do is they used to - so, this is when Phoenix House was just a one-group-home spot. It wasn't the big organization, the fantastic organization - I'm not saying it wasn't fantastic then, it just didn't have all the different tools at its disposal that it has now. It was just the one place on Hunter Street, as the minister probably knows. It was just the group home. That was it. It was a boys-and-girls group home, that was it. Nobody in the community wanted us there. They didn't want us anywhere around it. The neighbours would yell at us and they'd call the cops constantly on us.

One of the things that Linda Wilson, who was the executive director at the time, and Michael Skinner, who was in charge of the - and Ainslie MacNeil-Campbell, who were all - they were the executives under Linda. They decided they were going to bring in individuals from the community that could talk to the kids and tell them their story and how to overcome and things like that. The two people I remember the most were - the very first one that I was in awe of was a gentleman named Ricky Anderson, who was a former boxer. I got to know Ricky very well over the years. An incredible individual. Should have been a world champion if not for injuries. Ricky overcame a lot.

Then they brought Allan Rowe in and I just remember - okay, so if you think I was hyper eight years ago, rewind twenty-something years ago, where I was just like sugar, I couldn't sit still, it was incredible. I heard this booming voice coming up the stairs. Anyways, Allan talked to us, and I was being a bit of a dink at the time, and he called me out on it. Then I got to find out what he did for a living. He was a broadcaster. I wanted to be a sports broadcaster my entire life, and somehow I ended up a politician, and funny enough, I ended up a politician sitting next to Allan Rowe, which is kind of crazy how life is.

I hadn't thought about Allan Rowe until I found out that he was running for politics. It was an incredible moment, and I was proud that in his final days, Yvonne allowed me to be a part of that. I'm especially proud that I got to speak at his funeral and tell him, let him know at the hospital and at the funeral, what he meant to me over the years. It says something that - we have some pretty incredible members here on all sides, but that man's morals were so solid. (Applause)

To the late great Allan Rowe, I love you. Hopefully, someday I'll see you soon - not soon. Hopefully, someday I'll see you. Some people may hope that. I will see you some day, sir.

I'm going to quickly run through some people, and then I will stop. I'm not going an hour. I don't have it in me. It took the wind out of me earlier in the week.

I want to recognize the people who got me here. I want to recognize in particular Linda Wilson, whom some may know. Some in this Chamber actually know Linda Wilson was the executive director of Phoenix House when I lived there. I was 16 years old. I'm going to tell this story on record because I've never said this before, but it means a lot that something like this should be told.

When I was a foster child, I got into foster care - my mind has always been foggy on the beginning, the early days. My biological parents were from Northern Ireland. They had a few children there. Then they came to England, where they had me. Then they came to Canada, where they had another one. Then they went back to Ireland, and they came back to Canada. My story doesn't define me, so I'm not going to get into it all.

For one reason or another, mostly drugs and abuse, we ended up in foster care, and we all kind of went our separate ways. Later on in life, we were reunited, and some are good and some are bad. I guess that's life. I wanted to tell a story about Phoenix House - two stories. Sorry, Derek.

One of them was that the reason I ended up at Phoenix House was, I was 16 years old. I had my own apartment. I was in my fourth year in high school, which is to say I was not doing well in high school. I did what we called the five-year plan, which not many of us did. I decided that I needed to graduate from high school when I was 19 years old and I was seeing my teacher in the bar. I thought, I probably should graduate from high school now.

A big part of that wasn't that I didn't have the capability to do that. That's why I do get offended easily when people challenge me on something like that. It wasn't that I didn't have the ability to do it. It's that for children to succeed, they have to have a stable foundation. They have to have a safe place to call home.

[8:15 p.m.]

In between those things, the Department of Community Services thought it was smart to give a 16-year-old kid his own apartment. Imagine what that was like. It was a gong show. I became the most popular kid in high school real quickly. Everybody got to do whatever they wanted at my apartment.

I wouldn't change anything. I say that all the time. People who know me, who know the real details of my life and the good and the bad and the ugly, I wouldn't change anything, because it made me the person that I am today and it built the relationships that I have. I'm proud of where I have come from and where I have gotten, but I haven't done it by myself: 10 per cent or 15 per cent of this was me. The rest was everybody else who had faith and built me up.

The reason why I wanted to mention Phoenix House was twofold. I'll always be a Phoenix youth. I'd be 80 years old, I will always be a Phoenix youth. I love that organization and I appreciate that organization. They saved my life. That's where I met Linda Wilson, who is now like a mother to me and is the godmother of my children. She saw a kid with a Mohawk who had a million different piercings in his face, who smoked a pack of cigarettes a day, and fought everyone who stood in front of him, most of the time losing those fights, I'm not going to lie, but she saw something in me that I didn't see in myself.

I ended up at Phoenix House because of the road I was going down and it's something that I mentioned to the member for Preston today, whom I respect immensely and who actually has a relationship with my in-laws - they absolutely love her, too. It was Phoenix House - here, the options were Phoenix House - and I want this to sink in for a

minute - Phoenix House or the Home for Colored Children, that's what my social worker told me. Phoenix House, the Home for Colored Children.

The reason I want to bring that up is because it wasn't just that option, it was Phoenix House or the Home for Colored Children and you know what they do to children like you in the Home for Colored Children. That's what was said. That was the reason I ran in 2013, because Stephen McNeil made a promise to do something about the Home for Colored Children. I had friends who went through there and it was a threat that hung over my head by individuals who were supposed to be in a place - they were in a position of power that were supposed to put me in a safe place and that's what was said to me.

I was scared to death going into the interview because Phoenix House used to be a little different. You'd go in for an interview - it wasn't that just you went in and you actually had an interview. You had to go in, you had to have an interview. So, I'm being driven to the interview, they are, like, okay, listen, both your brothers have lived here, one's a positive thing, one's a negative thing, so mention this brother, don't mention that brother. Okay. Here are the things they like, here are the things they don't like. Okay.

So I get in there, I sit in the room. This lady walks in, she sits down. She looks at my name and she looks at me and she goes, I always wondered what happened to you. And I was like, what? It was Ainslie MacNeil-Campbell, who is still to this day one of my closest friends and works on my campaign. She was the social worker on duty the night I got taken away from my parents. She was the social worker on call who showed up at the mall and took us and she hadn't seen me since that day. She was the one who was in charge of interviewing me to get into Phoenix House. She just looked me and said, you're in, you're done.

The reason I bring up these people is because the family is different, like it's so different. Like we can't choose our family, we can't choose our past, it's things that happened. But these people are my family now. They work on my campaigns, they are with my children, they are with my beautiful partner, Rena.

A funny story: In 2012, when they were looking for a candidate in Halifax Atlantic and they came to interview me, they asked my wife if she wanted to run instead. She said, I'm not that crazy. I'd get myself in trouble; I have a big mouth. I was like, what are you talking about? - this is me.

Your family comes in all different shapes and sizes and they come with all kinds of different experiences. I do get kind of excited or wound up sometimes - I think my natural instinct has always been to push back or fight back and just - I know it's strange to say but I actually love campaigning because it brings back kind of the underdog feeling. I always feel like I'm the underdog and I've got to run and I've got to prove all over again.

I want to thank everyone at Phoenix. Tim Crooks, who now runs the organization, was actually a part-time - when I lived there - there's something the Minister of DCS can bug him about - I think he was a part-time physical education instructor or something at Phoenix House at the time and he had this God-awful ponytail, so the Minister of Community Services, sorry, you can ask Tim where his ponytail is - the thing was horrendous.

So to Rena, I want to thank you. She probably right now has the TV on and thinking, shut up and come home. (Laughter) She also likes it when I'm in the Legislature because I don't talk as much at home. She says for me to just get it out at the Legislature.

We actually met on Plenty of Fish, of all places. I'd never tried that site before and I had just thought I was never going to find anyone and then a friend of mine said she was going to start an account for me. I said, "Whatever." Rena on Plenty of Fish - she's going to kill me for that. I'm sorry.

We met. On our second date, our sister and brother-in-law were on the date - it was a double date - and I told her brother-in-law, James, that I was going to marry her. Three or four weeks later, I proposed to her. Six months later, we were married. Shortly after that, she was pregnant. That was 10 years ago. (Applause)

The funny part is that like most couples, we bicker. We get into stuff. The member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville has been with his girlfriend for 20 years and he still hasn't proposed. Come on, buddy. (Interruption) Out of order there. That's forever in Hansard. That's right.

Rena gave me the gift of three beautiful children: Oliver, Ruphina and Isla. They gave me the ability to break the cycle and right the wrongs of the past and ensure that my children were never afraid to go to sleep. They were never hungry.

I'm obviously very, very proud to be where I'm at today as the member for Halifax Atlantic. If this all went away tomorrow and I still had my wife and children, so be it. They're the most important thing in my life. She's probably actually going to be more upset that I'm getting mushy than anything.

She also gave me confidence. Believe it or not, it's not that I was an introvert - I just didn't have the confidence to be in a room. I always thought that people were better than me; that they came from a better background, they had a better education, they had a better job, they had this, that, or the other thing. It didn't matter what I had, I just always felt like that.

That's kind of how you're, at times, raised and that's the belief that gets into your head when you go through multiple foster homes. I know there are people here who have had that experience, but to wake up one morning and somebody's in your house that you

don't know, and they are telling you to pack your bags - or your bags are already packed - and you're going from Sackville to Halifax to live over here. Or you're going from Halifax to Harrietsfield, or you're going from Harrietsfield to Herring Cove or you're going from here to here.

Then they come and they take you and they put you in the house. I'm assuming it's different now - I'm hoping it's different now. They would spend about an hour with you and your new family, and they would leave. That was it. You were expected to assimilate to the family.

I remember when I moved in with Ruby and Eve - Ruby's long been gone - I probably spent the first week literally sleeping in the doghouse. I used to crawl outside at night, and they had this big, beautiful dog, Thunder. Everybody was scared of the dog, but he was just a beautiful dog. It was back in the day when you'd have your doghouse outside and your dog would be there and I would crawl into the doghouse and stay there with him overnight. The first night, they lost their minds because they thought they lost me, but then they realized what I was doing. They tried to convince me and it just took me a while.

I look back at how privileged I am to have some really good foster parents over the years. Obviously, there are always ones who aren't as good as others. I'm actually one of the lucky ones. I know individuals, and I'm not going to get into it, who have had a really, really, really tough time with different forms of abuse. You can't overcome that. You do that to a child, and then you expect them to get over it. Even the smallest amount defines who you are, and it sits in you.

Back to Rena, she helped me get over some of that stuff. I had some issues and stuff that I'm not proud of, and she helped me get over that. She helped give me confidence. That means a lot. People talk about the strength of a strong partner or strong woman. In my case it's absolutely true.

I have had a lifetime of strong women around me, and I only started realizing that when I ran for politics. I had Linda and Ainsley and Marian and Chris and Kelly and Rena and her sister Ruphina and her sister Teresa and her mom and all these strong women who believed in me for most of my life.

It was ironically the men whom I didn't have. Eve became a stronger role model, more so when I had children. It was always women. I'll never forget that, and I'll never forget the love and the support they have given me. Marg and Harry, who both passed away, the Pooles - my friend from Herring Cove probably remembers Poole Drive. I lived at the very tippety-top of the road with the Pooles. He probably went to school with Craig Poole, actually. You probably remember Craig. Christine Fletcher and so many others along the way.

I want to especially give a shout-out to all the strong women out there who have helped not only raise me, but when it comes to foster care, when it comes to children in care, and when it comes to families, the women, traditionally in my experience, just seem to carry the brunt and have the biggest heart. I'm not putting men down by any means, I'm just saying.

I'm here at 8:30 p.m. at night, and we have had late nights. It was Rena at home taking care of those kids, helping those kids, teaching them, reading them Harry Potter. They won't let me read Harry Potter. My son says I can't read. But I'm like, yeah, I can read, buddy. I can read, Oliver. I'm going to play that for him too. Daddy can read - sometimes. I can't pronounce any of the stuff, like the squibble-squabble or whatever it is in Harry Potter. I don't know what it is.

[8:30 p.m.]

I do want to give a shout-out to one of my social workers, Charmaine Tanner. Charmaine was a social worker for a long time. She retired. I hadn't seen Charmaine in forever. I actually aged out at 21. At 19, they decided that they needed to keep me in a little longer, which was the right thing to do. Charmaine called me after my 2013 election. I hadn't spoken to her in decades. She was like, I knew you would be okay. Charmaine, if you're watching, I just want to thank you for everything you did. It was something to be said.

That's one of the things I want to talk about - I said I wasn't going an hour, and I'm at 30 minutes. I apologize to everyone. If I could make a suggestion to the Minister of Community Services, children in care, it's very hard for them to build relationships. We know that the policy in Community Services has changed, and they rotate out social workers every year or so with the youth so that the youth don't actually build a relationship. They think it's unhealthy for that child to build a relationship with their social worker. I'm here to tell you, one of the healthiest relationships I ever had was the 12 or 14 years that I had Charmaine Tanner.

If we're talking about a review of Community Services, that's a small change of policy. I don't know why the policy was made, but if you look at from almost a holistic level, it's kind of inhumane.

If children that have a very hard time trusting, children that have been abused and beaten, and called down to the lowest, some of them, and they don't trust adults. And then they're put into a vehicle to drive back and forth from places, supervised visits - I went through it all. We were there. Supervised visits when you were a kid with your siblings and your biological parents and you had to have someone that you trusted in the room, and that was Charmaine.

But if you're rotating out that social worker every year or so, it just gives a sense to that child that nobody cares. It's hard for them to build that attachment. It's so fundamental to who they are as a human being, to build and be able to trust adults at a young age.

If you take that away from them, and if you don't give them adults in their life that they can trust, or adults in their life that, at least, they see - because kids are not stupid. They see when adults care. We used to say at Phoenix House, we knew every single counsellor that actually cared. We knew the ones who were doing it because they didn't care, it was just a job. We knew. Kids know that, and they feel like - I talk to children in care all the time. It's one of the things I've taken very seriously in this role and that's the one thing they talk about, one day it's this person, the next day, someone else.

I saw some of the members over there shaking their head and some of them clapped when I made that suggestion, so I would say to you, all of you, is try to have that conversation in caucus when it comes to community services.

I want to talk about my school now. Thank you to the former Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development whom I drove absolutely nuts. You guys think you have it bad? Imagine if you were going to give me something but I had to keep bugging you until I got it. I would drive the Premier nuts, I would drive the ministers nuts. There were, I think, four chiefs of staff, and I think I'm partly to blame for that. I think some of the chiefs of staff were like, you know what? I'm not dealing with this guy anymore, I'm done. I'm done.

I want to thank them for the school. I want to thank the member for Timberlea-Prospect who was the Minister of Environment at the time. He was the only minister to come down and visit Harrietsfield for the environmental disaster that was down there, for the C&D site, and made a promise on site - he made a little promise, but, as I always do, he was like, yeah, we're going to look into this, and I'm like, "We're going to clean it!" I took that little promise and made it into a big promise, but we did it. It got cleaned, and it took decades and decades and decades of that community asking, and it finally got done. It means a lot.

I know these areas, the Pennants and Harrietsfield and all these things, most of you don't know what they are. We've all got those little areas in our community, but they mean something to people. They're people's lives and their homes and where they grew up. If you look around the corner, I would imagine it was the same in Sydney with the Sydney Tar Ponds, and you turn around and you see this thing, and you know it's making your people sick and nobody's doing anything about it.

The very first call I made when I got elected, I think right after the Cabinet was announced, I called Randy Delorey, who was the Minister of Environment at the time. I

said, "I'm not going to stop. You'd better get used to it, bud. You either get it done or change your number. One or the other." I told him. He changed his number.

The member for Timberlea-Prospect stood in Harrietsfield and took questions from a community, an angry community, about everything that had happened. He answered them, he made a promise, and he helped deliver on it.

What I want from all of you is just - listen I know this is all partisan and decisions are going to be made based on what's good for Nova Scotia, but, also, what's good for the party. We know that, right. We're not dumb here. Ultimately, everybody wants to get re-elected, but one of the things I made a promise - and I know it's kind of funny, me saying it because you've heard from me more than just about any member in this House - but I made a promise to myself going into this that I would try my hardest to be the Opposition that I always wanted the Opposition to be.

I know we take little digs and little shots here and we stand up and stuff like that, but I'll be honest, I respect each and every one of you because I know it isn't easy to get into the position that you're in.

You especially respect the two-timers and the three-timers. A former politician told me one time that any fool can get elected once. It's the ones who get elected two, three, four times, when you have a record. People will start judging you on what you've done for them.

I see the member for Eastern Passage shaking her head. I have people over there who didn't vote for you, and I have people who did vote for you that I know, but they all say the same thing - she works her tail off. That's, I think, what people want. They want people to listen. They want them to work. Most, if not all of this, kind of goes unnoticed most of the time unless we clip it and put it on social media.

I'm going to wrap this up. I just want to take a moment to thank some of the individuals and members in the community. I want to thank KHARA - Ketch Harbour Area Residents Association. They've always been there and they work their absolute behinds off. Pete Rose in particular and the whole group down there. They've done an incredible job of helping turn that community around, from taking an old fire station and turning it into a vibrant community hall, taking over the old wharf down there, the dory races and dory practising. They've just done an incredible job and they've created an amazing community.

SACA, which is the Sambro community. Five or six times a year they have a beautiful dinner. They put on Sou'wester Days. They work really hard to keep the fishing tradition alive and to keep - to make people remember. I always say Sambro and those areas are such hard-working communities - the best lobster in the world.

The Herring Cove Community Centre group - which my wife, Rena, just informed me the other day she's now the president of, so I guess I have to give them a shout-out. They're doing an incredible job. The Spryfield Community Association - so many great groups that help make our community what it is.

One of the things that people don't know is that we have the Santa Claus Parade in our community, which will be in a couple of weeks, which is actually the oldest Santa Claus Parade in HRM. It's packed. We have a lot of fun, except for the year that I was following a police horse. I'm not going to get involved in that. I'm just going to say that I ruined my shoes.

It's a unique community that's absolutely changing. It's one of the few communities in HRM that has a lot of room to grow. Those who have HRM communities that are kind of on the outskirts understand this, but it's kind of that rural/urban feel. You could go to part of your community and you're in an urban core. Then you drive 20 minutes or a half-hour down the road - literally, Ketch Harbour Road goes and then it just stops; if you go any further, you're going into the ocean.

It's so unique and fun to watch because you can see it changing and you can see the different people from different backgrounds, but we all mix so well together and that's what's so special about that community. I'm proud to be from that community. I've lived a lot of places in my life, but that community is home and that's why I get so passionate and I fight so hard for them.

Quite frankly, that community saved my life. When I was homeless, they gave me a roof over my head. When I was hungry, they put food in my belly. When I needed a place to sit down and relax, I went to Purcell's Cove Social Club. There's always something there and I truly believe it's the most welcoming and friendly community in all of Nova Scotia. I owe them a debt of gratitude and I'm not going to stop until I feel that that is paid off. Even then, I'll keep going. (Applause)

Last, but not least, I want to thank the campaign workers who were part of my team. I know that a lot of us will say that this was a different campaign because it was a Summer campaign and it was very hard for a lot of people to get volunteers, whether they want to admit it or not. There were a lot of times when people couldn't get the full day out of somebody because people were going to their cottages.

I had a full roster. I had no problem. The same people that have been with me since 2013 are still there and it's expanded. It's gotten larger. We had a team of around 50 people who worked day and night. We had position after position filled - we had public relations, we had communications, we had fundraisers, we had people out every single day, knocking. We had a team of 12 people who put out 900 signs - 900 signs is what we put out this time around, and that was less than the last election.

I will say that my goal this year was to put a little hurtin' into the member for Yarmouth at the polls. He likes to brag about being the "oh, I got 70 per cent," or whatever it is. So, we made a little bet and he beat me by 0.1 per cent, so he's a good man.

But to Martha Reynolds, who has been there forever, thank you; Linda Wilson, thank you; Chris Hornberger, who would literally leave clothes and say, you need to wear this today; Kelly Gomes, who is my CA, but also worked day and night on my campaign; Hughie Frasier, who was my shop teacher, who did an incredible job on signs; Bill and Becky Fields.

I'm missing so many people, but you know what it's like when you're just kind of going through it in your head and you're drawing a blank. To the entire executive board, I want to thank you for all you do. To Ruphina Kaulback, who was my official agent. To the advice I received from both Jack and Danny Graham throughout the years, who have helped me out in many different ways, two of the few ones in the beginning that really believed in me. To the entire campaign team.

We took a picture at the end and it was 90 per cent women who took time out of their day to get me elected. I kid you not when I say they would leave clothes out in the morning, at the office. I would show up, I'd get dressed, the schedule would be there, I'd knock on those doors, I'd come back, and that's kind of rinse and repeat, rinse and repeat.

To Rick Pelham, who was also there for the signs. Neil, you did an incredible job. To everybody who was part of this team from the beginning, who had belief in me when I didn't have belief. I'll be honest, I still have lots of fleeting moments in my mind and I think - some of you may or may not - but I still have lots of fleeting moments in my mind where I'm like, I don't belong here, what am I doing here? This is crazy, who in the heck would ever vote for me?

But the people have put their trust in me. I am proud to be a Liberal who represents John Buchanan's riding. That's what I will always say. This is not - this is the People's House. The member for Halifax Armdale said this is the People's House and I agree, but this is John Buchanan's seat. Most people who are in politics knew that. Johnny B. was bigger than life and I'm proud and I hope that I've done him proud. I hope that I do the people of this community proud.

To Ruphina, Oliver, Isla, and Rena - no, no, I was just thinking. I did not forget my wife's name. I love you, I couldn't do this without you. You make me complete, kiddos, and thank you for everything. Daddy will be home soon.

THE SPEAKER: To the member for Halifax Atlantic, you were true to your word that you were not going to use up an hour. But you were pretty darn close.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I think I'll take some time tonight and just talk a little bit. (Laughter) That concludes government business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Friday, November 5th, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Government business will include third reading of Bill No. 67 and Bill No. 71.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on Friday, November 5th between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

[The House rose at 8:45 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 84**

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 Ali Duale, a resident of Beechville, was elected August 17th, 2021, to the House of Assembly as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Halifax Armdale; and

Whereas Ali and his wife fled a brutal civil war in Somalia and landed in a refugee camp in Kenya where they spent seven years and raised three children, and after much perseverance and determination to overcome challenges most cannot even imagine, Ali and his family were accepted into Canada as refugees; and

Whereas Ali has served as a volunteer on numerous community organizations, has helped to build a new community centre, has coached basketball, has delivered food to friends and neighbours during the pandemic, and has served as ears and eyes of the community to ensure the Otter Lake Landfill operates in a safe and healthy manner;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating, thanking, and recognizing Ali for his support and leadership to the community, his unwavering optimism, high spirits, and celebration of community.

RESOLUTION NO. 85

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas in 2016, a group of five friends gathered to discuss the creation of a unique running club for the residents of Beechville, Lakeside, and Timberlea, called the BLT Runners Club; and

Whereas the group set up a registered non-profit society with an elected board of directors and hosts an AGM every year to create a unique, cohesive, and structured organization that brings like-minded sprinters and joggers together to keep fit and help them meet their long-term fitness goals; and

Whereas the convenient access to the BLT Trails provides the perfect venue for the runners to meet, making it easy, fun, and social to get motivated, be active, and enjoy the

benefits of physical movement to improve your overall health and well-being and help cope with life's stressors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing all the members of the BLT Running Club for their dedication and commitment to meet the challenges of finding time to include regular activity into their life.

RESOLUTION NO. 86

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 Camryn McNeil, a resident of Hubley, business owner and young entrepreneur of Golden Living Seniors Lifestyle Support, who holds the title of Canada's youngest yoga instructor and has always had an interest in health and wellness; and

Whereas the focus of Golden Living Seniors Lifestyle Support is to help seniors to continue living in their own home while maintaining overall wellbeing and quality of life through the combination of fostering lifestyle enrichment, daily movement, and companionship for a meaningful and happy life; and

Whereas the services offered include meal prep, light housekeeping, personal shopping, customized outings, and the benefits from socializing and participating in a weekly walking club;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Camryn for her support, compassion, and friendship she provides to seniors who continue to live in their own home.

RESOLUTION NO. 87

By: Hon. John Lohr (Kings North)

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

Whereas Mike Huntley and Huntley's Diving & Marine Services is a local professional commercial construction diving business in the town of Kentville; and

Whereas Mike Huntley and Huntley's Diving & Marine Services provides much needed diving services aimed at developing and supporting emerging technologies, consulting, as well as analytical and environmental support services; and

Whereas the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce is a strong united voice of business and works to ensure that business thrives in the Annapolis Valley;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mike Huntley and Huntley's Diving & Marine Services of Kentville as the Chamber of Commerce Valley's Best 2021 winner in the Best Business Not in Any Other Category.

RESOLUTION NO. 88

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

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 a momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities, author Edna J. Leshan wrote; and

Whereas on November 2nd, 2021, parents Chris and Melanie Wolfe welcomed their son Bryson Douglas Wolfe into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating parents Chris and Melanie on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

RESOLUTION NO. 89

By: Ronnie LeBlanc (Clare)

À une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que Mlle Evelyn LeBlanc-Joyce, jeune femme de Clare bien impliquée dans sa communauté a toujours été présente aux activités communautaires en tant que participante ou bénévole.

Attendu que le Certificat de mérite Denise Samson, volet jeune femme décerné par la Fédération des Femmes Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse reconnaît une jeune

femme acadienne pour son dévouement à la cause de l'avancement des femmes acadiennes et/ou francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Attendu que le certificat n'est pas remis chaque année - il faut une candidate exceptionnelle, impliquée de façon importante dans la communauté pour se le mériter.

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que les membres de l'Assemblée législative félicitent Mlle. Evelyn LeBlanc-Joyce sur l'obtention du Certificat Denise Samson (volet jeune femme) 2020-2021 décerné par la Fédération des Femmes Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

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

Whereas Miss Evelyn LeBlanc-Joyce, a young woman from Clare who is very involved in her community and has always been present at community activities as a participant or volunteer; and

Whereas the Denise Samson Certificate of Merit, young woman component, awarded by the Fédération des Femmes Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse, recognizes a young Acadian woman for her dedication to the advancement of Acadian and/or Francophone women in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the certificate is not awarded every year, it requires an outstanding candidate who is significantly involved in the community to receive it;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Miss Evelyn LeBlanc-Joyce on the awarding of the 2020-2021 Denise Samson Certificate (young women's component), which was awarded by the Fédération des Femmes Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

RESOLUTION NO. 90

By: Ronnie LeBlanc (Clare)

À une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que Mme. Glenda Doucet-Boudreau, originaire de Saint-Bernard et résidente des Concessions, est une femme très impliquée et infatigable qui travaille pour le droit des femmes et le droit à l'éducation francophone soit comme étant présidente de l'Association Madeleine LeBlanc, secrétaire de la Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse ou bien comme étant à la tête de l'affaire Doucet-Boudreau c. la Nouvelle-Écosse; et

Attendu que Mme. Doucet-Boudreau, fut reconnu par la Compagnie des Cents-Associés francophones pour être l'un de leurs nouveaux membres pour l'an 2021; et

Attendu que cet honneur venant de la Compagnie des Cents-Associés francophones est décerné aux Canadiens et Canadiennes qui, de façon exemplaire, ont travaillé bénévolement au développement et à la promotion de la francophonie canadienne;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que les membres de l'Assemblée législative félicitent Mme. Glenda Doucet-Boudreau pour son adoubement à la Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones et la remercie pour son dévouement à la francophonie.

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

Whereas Mrs. Glenda Doucet-Boudreau, a native of St. Bernard and a resident of Concessions, is a very involved and tireless woman who works for women's rights and the right to francophone education either as President of the Association Madeleine LeBlanc, secretary of the Fédération des Femmes Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse or as the head of the case Doucet-Boudreau v. Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Mrs. Doucet-Boudreau, was recognized by the Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones to be one of their new members for the year 2021; and

Whereas this honor from the Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones is awarded to Canadians who, in an exemplary manner, have worked voluntarily for the development and promotion of the Canadian Francophonie;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mrs. Glenda Doucet-Boudreau on her induction into the Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones and thank her for her dedication to the Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 91

By: Ronnie LeBlanc (Clare)

À une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que Mme. Elaine Saulnier-Thimot, originaire du Petit-Ruisseau et résidente de Bangor, est une bénévole très impliquée et infatigable dans sa communauté acadienne de la Baie Sainte-Marie sois comme étant membre de conseil administrative, directrice générale de La Société acadienne de Clare ou bien pour être reconnu comme fondatrice de la Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, de la Fédération

régionale des arts et du Patrimoine de la Baie Sainte-Marie et du Conseil jeunesse provincial; et

Attendu que Mme. Saulnier-Thimot, fut reconnu par la Compagnie des Cents-Associés francophones pour être l'un de leurs nouveaux membres pour l'an 2020; et

Attendu que cet honneur venant de la Compagnie des Cents-Associés francophones est décerné aux Canadiens et Canadiennes qui, de façon exemplaire, ont travaillé bénévolement au développement et à la promotion de la francophonie canadienne;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que les membres de l'Assemblée législative félicitent Mme. Elaine Saulnier-Thimot pour son adoubement à la Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones et la remercie pour son dévouement à la francophonie.

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

Whereas Mrs. Elaine Saulnier-Thimot, a native of Little Brook and resident of Bangor is a very involved and tireless volunteer in her Acadian community of la Baie Sainte-Marie either as a member of the Board of Directors, Executive Director of La Société acadienne de Clare, or to be recognized as a founder of the Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, of the Fédération régionale des arts et du Patrimoine de la Baie Sainte-Marie, and of the Conseil jeunesse provincial; and

Whereas Mrs. Saulnier-Thimot was recognized by the Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones as one of their new members for the year 2020; and

Whereas this honour from the Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones is awarded to Canadians who, in an exemplary manner, have volunteered for the development and promotion of the Canadian Francophonie;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Mrs. Elaine Saulnier-Thimot on her induction into the Compagnie des Cents-Associés Francophones and thank her for her dedication to the Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 92

By: Ronnie LeBlanc (Clare)

À une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que Mme Jocelyne Comeau, originaire de Meteghan, a dédié plus que 35 ans au développement communautaire en tant que membre du conseil d'administration sur plusieurs associations acadiennes et francophones de sa communauté; et

Attendu que Mme Comeau, fut nommé récipiendaire du prix Hommage en développement culturel 2021 décerné par la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; et

Attendu que ce prix d'Hommage en développement culturel est décerné chaque année à un ou une individu ou un groupe qui contribue largement à l'Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que les membres de l'Assemblée législative félicite Mme Jocelyne Comeau pour son obtention du prix Hommage en développement culturel 2021 décerné par la FéCANE.

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

Whereas Ms. Jocelyne Comeau, a native of Meteghan, has dedicated more than 35 years to community development as a member of the Board of Directors of several Acadian and Francophone associations; and

Whereas Ms. Comeau was named recipient of the Hommage en développement culturel 2021 award by the Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse; and

Whereas the Hommage en développement culturel award is presented annually to an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to l'Acadie in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ms. Jocelyne Comeau on receiving the Hommage en développement culturel 2021 award from la FéCANE.