



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain

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First Session

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 2022

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HALIFAX, FRIDAY, JULY 29, 2022

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Keith Bain

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Angela Simmonds, Lisa Lachance

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 382

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

Whereas the transatlantic slave trade was one of the most horrific practices in our collective history, enslaving more than 15 million men, women, and children of African descent across the world, including here in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas it is critical to acknowledge the grim realities of the slave trade and the ongoing effects of anti-Black racism, while recognizing the strength, courage, and resilience of people of African descent who have been an important part of Nova Scotia's history for more than 400 years; and

Whereas Nova Scotia unanimously passed legislation in April 2021 to recognize August 1st as Emancipation Day in this province, to honour the anniversary of the British Parliament's decision to abolish slavery across its empire in 1834;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me and all Nova Scotians in recognizing Emancipation Day and taking this opportunity to learn more about the history of people of African descent while continuing to address systemic anti-Black racism today.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

BEAR RIVER CHERRY CARNIVAL: 129TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring recognition to the Bear River Cherry Carnival. They just celebrated their 129th anniversary. I had the pleasure to attend the carnival, which was held on July 16th. It was a beautiful sunny day full of events and

activities, including the famous Greased Pole. I also had the joy of making pancakes at the firehall's pancake and sausage breakfast with the Smith's Cove Fire Department.

The carnival was a huge success, and I'd like to thank the volunteers, the Bear River Fire Department, the Bear River Legion, the Smith's Cove Fire Department, all the vendors, businesses, musicians, sponsors, and those who support the carnival every year. Congratulations on 129 years of fun and success. I look forward to next year's celebration.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

CHEBUCTO LINKS ASSOC.: COM. SERV. - THANKS

ALIDUALE: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the West End Chebucto Links Senior Support Association for its amazing community service. Chebucto Links is a senior support and outreach organization that provides social and recreational programs and assists with information and resources. They have been serving seniors not just in the West End, but in the entire Halifax metro area since 1995.

Seniors are some of our province's most talented, knowledgeable, and caring citizens. I sincerely want to thank the Chebucto Links Senior Support Association for the dignified support they deliver and the selfless hours they put into providing this service for our community.

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

EMANCIP. DAY: ANNIV. OF SLAVERY ABOL. - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize Emancipation Day. August 1st marks the anniversary of when slavery was abolished in what we now know as Canada. It is a day of gathering, reflection, and celebration.

There is still lots of work to be done to make Nova Scotia an equitable and just province for all, and this day is one step in the right direction, as I hope will be the conversations that follow. The pan-African flag was raised this week at Grand Parade Square to mark the occasion, and the same area will be abuzz with celebration the evening of August 1st, featuring musical performances by the Nova Scotia Mass Choir, Jah'mila, and more on the Grand Oasis stage.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my fellow members join me in recognizing the importance of Emancipation Day and encouraging their communities to do the same.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

VALLILEE FAMILY: CF DRUG APPROVAL - THANKS

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I met with constituents Tim Vallilee and Agatha Bourassa, and Agatha requested that I pass a message along to members of the Nova Scotia Legislature. I would like to quote from that note:

“On behalf of myself, my husband Tim Vallilee, and our son, Isaiah, as well as all Nova Scotian families that have lived with cystic fibrosis, we would like to thank the collaboration of the former Health and Wellness minister, the member for Yarmouth, and the current Health and Wellness minister, the member for Antigonish. Their hard work has put Nova Scotia on the national map for being one of the quickest provinces to approve Trikafta for all children ages six and up.

Let it be known that the CF community is tremendously grateful for this great news. Twenty-one Nova Scotian CF children will now be able to thrive thanks to this decision.

Thanks so much to the current and past governments that have supported this life-changing medication. My husband Tim Vallilee, as well as several other cystic fibrosis patients, can now breathe like never before, thanks to this approval. Many families will now be able to relax knowing their loved ones have a new future, thanks to Trikafta and the Nova Scotia government that agreed to cover the cost.”

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all families whose lives have been changed for the better, I would like to thank everyone involved for approving this drug. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Just before we go on, I realize today’s Friday, but there’s quite a bit of chatter going on around the House as everybody’s up speaking. Just keep that in mind, please.

The honourable member for Annapolis.

JACKIE FOSTER: NAT. LAWN BOWLING TEAM MBR. - CONGRATS

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, it’s a great honour to rise today to celebrate Jackie Foster who’s representing Canada in the sport of lawn bowling at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England. This will be the third time that Jackie has had the honour to represent both Bridgetown and our country at the Commonwealth Games, after also competing in 2014 and 2018.

The Lawn Bowls competition starts today. It runs through August 6th, and Jackie's scheduled to compete in Pairs and Fours. Many constituents will be following all her matches, and I know that she'll make us all proud.

I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Jackie Foster on being chosen to be a member of the Team Canada Lawn Bowling Team at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, and I wish her all the very best of luck at this prestigious competition.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

DPAD COALITION: COM. SERV. - THANKS

SUZY HANSEN: I would like to rise today and recognize the African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition.

What is the DPAD Coalition? The coalition is an open group representing organizations that serve African Nova Scotian people, communities, interests, and needs. The coalition began to organize a response to an opportunity to present to the United Nations Working Group of Experts for People of African Descent in Halifax on October 19, 2016. The group's members recognize that the International Decade for People of African Descent during 2015 to 2024 provides a unique opportunity to build provincial, national, and international momentum for change that will benefit people of African descent in Nova Scotia and beyond.

I would like all the members to join me in recognizing the amazing work that all the staff do daily at the DPAD Coalition.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

HANTS N. BASEBALL TEAM: TOURN. WIN - CONGRATS.

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, in Hants County we take ball very seriously.

This year, the Hants North Under 18 AA Jays decided to play AAA. In their first year of AAA, the Jays went undefeated in the Baseball N.S. Nationals Elimination Tournament over the July 15th-17th weekend at Weir Field. This has earned them entry to the national championship next month in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

In their first game the Jays won against Dartmouth Arrows with a score of 15-1. The second game was against Tri County Rangers with a final score of 7-0, with Jacob Sanford on the pitching mound. That put the Jays into the semi-final game on Sunday against the Pictou County Highlanders. Eric Fields was the starting pitcher for this game,

only letting in two runs and helped push the Jays to the championship game with a score of 7-2.

Phoenix Remington started the championship game against the Halifax Mets and held the Mets off the scoreboard through the six innings. Hants North scored three in the first inning - that's a victory of 3-0.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the members of the House to extend congratulations to the Hants North Under 18 AAA Jays as they proudly represent Nova Scotia at the national championships.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

SISTER, MAGGIE - BIRTHDAY WISHES

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to wish my little sister Maggie a very happy birthday. She drove me crazy as a little sister picking on her big brother, but you know what? We get along pretty good.

She's over in Newfoundland and Labrador now. I love you, Maggie. I hope you have a great birthday with Andrew. They're doing the Newfoundland and Labrador tour now. I rise in my place to wish my little sister a very happy birthday.

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

SYDNEY-TORONTO REUNION: RETURN - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge this weekend kicks off the Sydney-Toronto Reunion in Whitney Pier. The annual reunion is nearly 40 years old. It started in the Pier to help bring Sydney's Black community together.

Since 2020, the reunion has not taken place due to COVID-19. Now, after a two year delay, the Sydney-Toronto reunion is back on. The community events are important to the fabric of our community. This tradition is crucial to maintaining community ties and providing opportunities for stories with friends and families to be shared.

Congratulations to the committee, and we look forward to taking in many of the great events that are listed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke.

[9:15 a.m.]

HUNT, WYMAN: 100TH BIRTHDAY - CONGRATS.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity today to wish WWII veteran Wyman Hunt, of Mount Uniacke, a very happy 100th birthday.

Wyman celebrated this memorable milestone on June 17, 2022, with the executive and members of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 165, along with the staff and customers at Eddy's Variety. Members of Legion No. 165 and the staff at Eddy's sent their well wishes to Wyman for his birthday, with the members of the Legion gifting him a plaque that acknowledged the occasion, and the owners of Eddy's Variety collecting 100 birthday cards from the public to celebrate his 100 years of life.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Wyman for his service in World War II, as well as wish him a memorable and prosperous 100th birthday, with many more hopefully to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

ORGANIZERS & VOLUNTEERS: SEAFEST - THANKS

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Seafest made a welcome return to Yarmouth last week. Seafest started in 1979 and is an annual celebration of life by the sea.

The beloved festival took place again after mostly virtual events during the last two years. Our community really enjoyed the classic car show, as well as the children's parade, the mayor's picnic in the park, and the mackerel toss, an event that I'm a former champion of, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the organizers and countless volunteers for all their hard work in bringing Seafest to life once again for our community and wish them continued success in the Summers to come.

THE SPEAKER: I notice you did say "former."

The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

PARTICIPANTS: NAT'L BLACK CDNS. SUMMIT - CONGRATS.

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to bring notice to everyone that the National Black Canadians Summit is happening here in Halifax starting today until the eve of Emancipation Day.

Powered by the Michaëlle Jean Foundation, it's aligned with the three pillars of the International Decade for People of African Descent: recognition, justice, and development. It is a major mobilization event, bringing together Black Canadians from all ages, sectors, and walks of life to share their experiences, raise awareness, and spark an inclusive national dialogue.

On the eve of Emancipation Day, communities in Canada will converge in Halifax for this third edition of the summit. With an anticipated 1,000 participants, this is one of the largest gatherings of its kind for Black Canadians. During this summit, many participants will witness the first-time Halifax Declaration, which I'll be a part of, a powerful statement of Canada's commitments and actions to eliminate systemic racial discrimination.

I would like all of us to join us in congratulating them on this weekend.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MACINNIS, BRIAN: KEN MANTIN AWD. RECIP. - RECOG.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Let us recognize a long-time community volunteer who was recently awarded the 2022 Ken Mantin Award by Hockey Nova Scotia for his outstanding contribution to amateur hockey development.

Port Hood's Brian MacInnis is a fixture at the Al MacInnis Sports Centre in Port Hood. He has been extensively involved in the operation of the Al MacInnis Sports Centre and has run a hockey skills camp for 35 years.

He currently serves as President of the Cape Breton West Major Midget Islanders, the only hockey team from Atlantic Canada who ever won the Canadian Midget Championship.

I remember Brian when he played with the Port Hood Bees. While only one of the MacInnis boys reached the NHL, I can tell you they were all very good hockey players. They were dominating on the ice. They were fast, tough, and with shots that would make the goalie lift the stick blade and wince. They always shared their talents in their community and are known for their kindness off the ice.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members of this Legislature to join me in thanking Brian MacInnis, who continues to leave his mark in Port Hood and our province. His contributions will be personally remembered by the many young hockey players he has helped.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

NICHOLAS, DEBORAH & MICHAEL: AIDING CRASH VICTIM - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I rise to recognize Deborah Nicholas and her husband Michael, a retired couple from Hubley.

Deborah and Michael live on the St. Margaret's Bay Road and their home is across the street from the BLT Trail. One evening in late April, Deborah and Michael were at home watching TV when they heard a knock at the door. Michael rose to answer the door and discovered a very distraught young man asking for help. In a traumatized state, he reported he and his best friend were in an ATV accident on the trail, and his friend was in a medical emergency and not responding.

Michael quickly grabbed a flashlight and jacket and went to the trail while Deborah called 911. Deborah, a retired nurse, headed to the trail once she knew help was on the way. When she arrived, the injured person had been unconscious for over a half hour and seemed to be severely injured. Deborah's medical training was a crucial factor in minimizing further injury and stabilizing the accident victim until the ambulance and RCMP arrived.

I'm happy to report the injured victim has recovered. I'd like the members of the House to join me in thanking Deborah and Michael for their courage, compassion, and assistance to come to the aid of these two young men.

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

SON, JASON - BIRTHDAY WISHES

LISA LACHANCE: I rise today to acknowledge the birthday tomorrow of a young Nova Scotian. My son Jason turns 19 on July 30th.

I am so proud of the person Jason has become. He has overcome much in his life: displacement, loss, and health struggles. Through it all, he has retained a wicked sense of humour, creativity, and a loving dedication to family and friends.

Since graduating from high school in June 2021, Jason has tried out NSCC, completed the youth employment program, travelled in Europe and across Canada, and helped me win an election campaign. He is off to Nunavut Sivunikavut - an Inuit science program in Ottawa in September.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in wishing Jason a very happy birthday.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

GRIFFIN, DAVID: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David Griffin, founder of the Windsor Karate Club, and congratulate him on his retirement as head instructor earlier this past year. David first competed at the national level in 1975 and went on to win many medals while competing.

David began teaching in 1981. From 1989 to 2001, he served as head coach of Karate Nova Scotia. He also served as head coach for Team Canada at the 5th World Chito-Ryu Championships. In 2009 he was appointed chief referee for Karate Nova Scotia and was named the 2013 Official of the Year by Karate Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the legislature to join me in offering congratulations to David on his retirement and thank him for his contributions to karate.

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

HFX. HAWKS MHA: CONTRIBS. TO SPORT - RECOG.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I have mentioned many times in this Chamber that Fairview-Clayton Park is the most multicultural community east of Montreal. As a community, we are not only proud of this distinction, but we embrace all it means.

The Halifax Hawks Minor Hockey Association exemplifies embracing multiculturalism with its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by ensuring a welcoming and safe environment for all participants.

Recently the Association was recognized for their work by Hockey Nova Scotia when they were awarded the 2022 Lauchie MacIsaac Award. This award is presented annually to associations, leagues, or individuals that have achieved outstanding success in the administration of minor hockey during the past hockey season.

The Hawks partnered with the Ummah Masjid Mosque to offer a try-hockey program for 20 boys and girls aged 7 to 10. The players also provided support for the Hockey Nova Scotia ISANS New Canadians Hockey Program, which welcomes young Canadian newcomers to the ice for the first time.

Most notably, the Association showed amazing leadership and compassion when a Hawks member experienced racism at an out-of-province event. Showing strong leadership and commitment to a healthy and safe environment in sport, the Hawks launched an anti-racism, wide-reaching social media campaign showing their commitment to having a zero-tolerance policy.

Mr. Speaker, in a time when racism, sexism, and misogyny are making headline news in sports, I am proud to have the Halifax Hawks Minor Hockey Association call Fairview-Clayton Park home and ask all members of this House to recognize the important contributions they have made to sport, our community, and most importantly, the young players of the game.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE: ACTION NEEDED - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize yet another emergency: climate change. The residents of Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier, like all Nova Scotians, are feeling the effects of climate change. During heavy rainfall, many constituents are experiencing severe flooding of their homes and businesses.

In the Winter, extreme storms of not just snow but of ice have caused significant damage to homes, knocking down power lines and stacks as well. This has caused many people to lose food from their fridges and freezers at alarming rates, and now we are experiencing a heat wave that is causing wells to dry up, negatively affecting people's health, causing heat strokes, and it also causing dry conditions that can lead to severe forest fires.

Mr. Speaker, we need action now and this is a real crisis.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

CURRIE, SHELDON: ORDER OF CANADA INDUCTION - CONGRATS.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I rise today to recognize and congratulate Antigonish resident Sheldon Currie on being inducted into the Order of Canada.

Mr. Currie was bestowed this honour for his significant contribution to Canadian literature, notably through his 30 years of service as fiction editor of *The Antigonish Review*.

He also held a post as an English professor at St. Francis Xavier University, where he shared his passion with the younger generation. His bibliography is rich and varied and includes short stories, plays, and novels about life in Cape Breton mining towns. One of his short stories, *The Glace Bay Miners' Museum*, originally published in the *Review*, was adapted into a feature film, entitled *Margaret's Museum*.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Mr. Sheldon Currie on this most deserving honour.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

KHAN, RYAAN: SPELLING BEE OF CAN. WINNER - CONGRATS.

BRAEDON CLARK: I would like to recognize and congratulate Ryaan Khan of Bedford, who just last month won the national Spelling Bee of Canada competition in Toronto for the 12 to 14 age group. The final word that he correctly spelled was “prelapsarian,” P-R-E-L-A-P-S-A-R-I-A-N, which is defined as “characteristic of or belonging to the time or state before the fall of humankind.” I guess we’re in a prelapsarian state right now, Mr. Speaker.

I want to congratulate Ryaan on his success and all the members of the House for learning a new word this morning.

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

INNER STRENGTH TAEKWONDO: CH’S SHIPS SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

HON. BRIAN WONG: I rise today to congratulate Wellington’s Inner Strength Taekwondo Academy on their tremendous success at the Pan American Taekwondo Championships in Costa Rica, held June 29th and 30th.

After winning 11 medals this Spring at the Taekwondo national championships, three athletes qualified for the Pan American Games in Costa Rica. All three athletes medalled, with Ronan Sinclair winning gold and Ciara Bennett and Raya Porter each taking home a bronze medal. I am pleased to congratulate these athletes, Master Porter, and the many parents and volunteers who support the Inner Strength Taekwondo Academy.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Ronan, Ciara, and Raya on their successful achievements at the Pan Am championship.

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

ELLIOTT, MURRAY: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour my friend Murray Elliott. I only have one minute so I’ll try my best, because he’s done a lot of work.

He was the former fire chief of the Westphal-Cole Harbour firefighters when the area had no fire department. He saw the need at that time, in the 1970s, when the Forest Hills housing plan was being created, that there needed to be a road to help get to the fires in the Westphal area quicker. He built the fire road which is today known as the Forest Hills Parkway.

Murray has a strong sense of community and is no stranger to hard work. His wife Carol wishes he would slow down, but like his wife Carol, we are all blessed to have Murray Elliott's many years of community building to enjoy today and for many years to come.

I want to recognize Murray. I think of him every day when I cross the Forest Hills Parkway.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Shelburne.

BENHAM, ED: INDIG. WOOD CARVING - RECOG.

NOLAN YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ed Benham, a local Mi'kmaw artist.

Initially fascinated by the skill and attention to fine details paid to their work by some local mantle duck carvers, an interest was sparked in his Indigenous heritage, so Ed decided to merge the two. Largely self-taught, using primarily hand tools such as knives, chisels and hand sanding, Ed's work bears his unique maker's mark painted or etched in each piece. The mark is ever-changing, consisting of his initials forming a circle divided into four. A dot inside denotes the season, and dots and dashes on the outside indicate the year the piece was finished.

Ed has pieces in private collections throughout Canada, the U.S., Australia, and Germany. In 2018, he participated at the Canadian National Exhibition, representing East Coast Indigenous wood sculpture.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask all members to join me in acknowledging this talented artist. Wela'lin.

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

EMANCIPATION DAY: SLAVERY ABOL. ANNIV. - RECOG.

HON. BEN JESSOME: I would just like to take this opportunity to wish everybody a wonderful long weekend and acknowledge August 1st as Emancipation Day.

I'm looking forward to spending some time in the wonderful community of Lucasville, Nova Scotia, one of our heritage ancestral Black communities throughout the province. I'm very fortunate to be a member who represents two of them, the other being Upper Hammonds Plains, and just note that we need to continue to be intentional about driving towards a world where systemic racism is not something that folks have to deal with on a regular basis.

We have made a lot of gains, but there's still lots of work to do, folks.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

SHEET HBR. SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE: PRIDE WEEKEND - RECOG.

KENT SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the luxury of 60 seconds of time. I rise to bring recognition to the Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre, a community organization that provides education, counselling, and referrals to those who need it regarding their sexual health.

The Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre demonstrates that everyone has the basic, dignified right to accurate, comprehensive, and accessible sexual and reproductive health information services. This weekend, executive director Lara Kaden and Centre staff will be hosting the first annual Sheet Harbour Pride Weekend. Celebratory events include a flag raising, a Pride walk, educational talks, a Pride Celebration Lunch, a free family barbeque and a garden party.

Many local businesses and organizations, such as the Sheet Harbour Public Library, LEA Place, the Harbourside Café, the Sheet Harbour Motel & the Slippery Oyster, are participating sponsors for this weekend.

I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in wishing Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre, supporters, volunteers, and participants a successful and safe weekend.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

ANN. CO. ATHLETICS CLUB: CH'SHIPS PERF. - CONGRATS.

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, Annapolis County has a rich history of exceptional track and field athletes, and the current members of the Annapolis County Athletics club are certainly no exception to this.

I am pleased to congratulate the athletes who represented this club at the 2022 Atlantic Canada Track and Field Championship meet. The girls' team finished an impressive second place overall, the boys coming in at a very respectable sixth place. Overall, the club finished fourth out of 37 teams. In addition to the tremendous team success, many personal bests were also achieved.

I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating all members of the Annapolis County Athletics club and wish them continued success in their athletic career.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

[9:30 a.m.]

KHOURY, ROY - THE SHAWARMA KING: FUNDRAISER - THANKS

HON. STEVE CRAIG: I rise today to thank Chef Roy Khoury and the staff of the Shawarma King in Lower Sackville. On July 2nd, Chef Roy Khoury, the owner of the restaurant, hosted a fundraising barbeque in support of Beacon House Food Bank and Freedom Kitchen & Closet, two local organizations that provide food to those in need.

The event was a great success. Not only did it bring the community together, but their efforts will help Beacon House Food Bank and Freedom Kitchen & Closet with the costs of providing food to those in our community who rely on them for these essential services.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Chef Roy Khoury and staff of the Shawarma King for their continued support and care for their neighbours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

TOURISM WORKERS: HARD WORK - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, as we are into the Summer months and we see the plates from all over the world coming into Nova Scotia - whether it is on the island or on the mainland - there are a lot of tourism operators who are working hard. This is their busy time of year. There also are a lot of volunteers, there are a lot of folks working in our Visitor Information Centres who are putting their best food forward so that when folks come to Nova Scotia they get the best experience possible.

I rise in my place today to recognize all of the folks and the workers in the tourism industry and the service industry, our volunteers who are helping to promote our communities, and thank them for really showing everyone from all over the world what a world-class place it is to come to Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

DYCK, HATTIE: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

TOM TAGGART: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hattie Dyck of Valley, Colchester County. Hattie is known for exceptional journalism with the *Chronicle Herald*, for her dedication to her community, and for the love of her children.

Hattie is an engaged member of our community. She wrote 11 books chronicling local history to preserve rural Nova Scotian history. She volunteered in politics for John

Buchanan. She also sat on several boards where she advocated for better health care in rural Nova Scotia. At 90, she continues to be an active member of the Royal Canadian Legion 26 in Truro.

I ask that you and the members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing the strong, tenacious, wonderful person - loyal to her family, loyal to her community and loyal to her province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

BAY FERRIES & N.S. GOVT.: CAT FERRY SERV. - THANKS

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the 2022 tourism season is going strong and with the CAT ferry back in Yarmouth's harbour, I just want to express how excited everyone is in Yarmouth and the Acadian Shores. I know that the tourists who come off that ferry are supporting businesses and the economy along the South Shore as well as the Valley. We've got plates from all over the United States, our restaurants are full, our small businesses are full.

I want to thank Bay Ferries Limited for the incredible work and resiliency they've shown and commitment to that run. I do want to thank the government for ensuring that that ferry service is running again this year, something that people were very concerned about. So looking forward to a successful August and strong numbers coming in at the end of the season.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

LEADER, NDP - BIRTHDAY WISHES

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, although I had to find out about this on Facebook, I would like to express and tell everyone that it is a very special birthday today. The member for Dartmouth South, the Leader of the NDP, is celebrating her birthday, and I would like to just say how amazing she is.

We started our political career together - Dartmouth South, Dartmouth North. We've been friends for longer than that. One time, she picked me up when I was very pregnant and drove me over the bridge on a really hot day, and I'm forever grateful for her for that.

The member is eloquent and articulate, highly intelligent, very funny. She is an amazing mum and an amazing friend, amazing daughter, amazing sister. She's a dedicated politician to her community and for her community and, as we are all discovering, a very powerful leader.

I'd like to wish her a very happy birthday and ask everyone to join me in doing that.
(Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

MULGRAVE ROAD THEATRE: COM. PROGRAMMING - THANKS

HON. GREG MORROW: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Mulgrave Road Theatre in Guysborough. For more than 40 years, they have been providing theatre productions in this province. Part of their mandate is to foster artistic and cultural experiences for the community.

For the last few years Mulgrave Road has created a 55+ program called Generations. Activities have included a weekly dance program that brought square and line dancing and other forms of movements. This encouraged socialization and physical activity. This past Fall, they offered a crafting program that was so well received they added extra classes. These programs are free and welcomed after many months of no in-person events.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that members join me in thanking the Mulgrave Road Theatre for their community programming.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

YORKE, IRENE: SCOUTS PGM. EFFORTS - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Irene Yorke of Hubley. In 1984, Irene decided to volunteer for her local Cub Scout Pack. Like many parents who volunteer their time for their children's extracurricular activities, Irene and her husband were both Scout leaders and became involved in the club when their own children went through the program.

Now, after 30 years of dedicating her time and talents to the First Five Island Lake Cubs, Irene has decided this will be her last year. A generation of children have enjoyed the quality organization and expertise of her leadership. She has dedicated countless hours to helping children aged eight to 10 by teaching the benefits of Scouting. Irene runs a tight ship, but her warm personality and friendly, inviting manner has always made her a popular Scout leader among the Cubs, and a trusted Scout leader among parents. Her steady leadership has helped to attract new members from all over the region.

I'd like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking Irene for her devotion to the Scouts Program, and her generosity of time to help our youth build self-confidence, develop interpersonal skills, and improve their self-esteem.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

O'HEARN, LILLIAN: GARDEN HERO OF YR. AWD. RECIP. - RECOG

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Lillian O'Hearn who was recently named as the Garden Hero of the Year by the Isle Madame Garden Club.

Lillian was born in 1933 and was raised on a mini-farm with 11 sisters and three brothers. Her mum loved flowers and thus began Lillian's love affair with her gardening. Lillian has been an active member of the Isle Madame Garden Club since it was formed in 2017. She has also been involved in many community projects. At the young age of 89, you will find Lillian on her ride-on tractor mowing her lawn, digging in the soil, and creating beautiful gardens on her property.

Please join me in honouring Lillian O'Hearn.

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

BROTHER, PETER & SISTER-IN-LAW: 27TH WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish my brother Peter and my sister-in-law Leona a very happy 27th anniversary. I'm significantly younger than my brother, so there were many years where I would just show up at their house and hang out, spend hours, and my sister-in-law never kicked me out. She was always pretty good with me being there.

Because of that, I had front-row seats for a lot of the marital spats that happen, especially in the first couple of years, and that led to a running joke in the family that Leona was convinced that I was never going to get married because of the example they were setting for me. I wanted to be on the record and say that even though I never did get married, it's only slightly their fault. (Laughter)

More importantly, I wanted to get on the record to thank them for actually providing me with the true loves of my life, who are my niece Rachel, my nephew Phillip, and my nephew Peter. They have raised three of the most exceptional kids who are now grown-ups - because, again, significantly younger - I'm younger than him. They are fantastic, they are a wonderful family, and I love them even more and more every day.

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

ST. MARG. BAY COM. ENT. CTR.: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I rise today to recognize the St. Margaret's Bay Community Enterprise.

Since 2014, the St. Margaret's Bay Community Enterprise Centre has been bringing together the private sector, the volunteer sector, and aspiring entrepreneurs. It provides a physical space to help create a strong and more vibrant community. They are involved in projects including Christmas in the Bay, Share the Harvest, the Peggy's Cove Area Festival of the Arts, and many others.

The centre would not be what is without the people who come together to make it happen, and on behalf of the community, I would like to extend a huge thank you to those volunteers.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing the St. Margaret's Bay Community Enterprise Centre for the work they do to bring the community together.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

TINA & SHERIDAN: FEED YOUR SOUL APPAREL - RECOG.

BRAEDON CLARK: I'd like to congratulate and recognize small business owners and mother-daughter team Tina and Sheridan of Bedford South in their new venture, Feed Your Soul Apparel.

Tina and Sheridan have both suffered with anxiety and depression throughout their lives, and although it may have hindered them at times, their struggles have made them stronger. It has helped them to find their deepest core values and brought them compassion, empathy, and understanding.

Sheridan is a fantastic and talented artist, and she and her mother knew they wanted to explore meaningful and creative ways to end the stigma that surrounds mental health. When Sheridan was going through an especially difficult time, Tina told her to do only things she loves, things that would fuel her happiness. "Feed your soul," she would say. It has remained an unwavering phrase for them both ever since.

The creative selection of items sold at Feed Your Soul Apparel are created from Sheridan's hand-drawn art and provide unique prints and heartfelt messages meant to inspire and uplift others. They found it only appropriate to name this venture from those powerful words. I hope that these supportive messages will find their way to you and feed your soul too.

Thank you, Tina and Sheridan, for your courage and commitment to end the stigma by inspiring others with your supportive messages.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

SMITH, RETA: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: I rise today to recognize the life of Reta Smith. Reta passed away on July 22, 2022, at the age of 101 years old. I got to know Reta through her daughter Sue, who looked after her mother and her father before her, and her brother before them.

Reta was a founding member of St. Stephen's Church and was very active in her school, community, and church, with a Cursillo Movement and the RCIA program, Ladies of Sodality, St. Vincent de Paul, and Hope Cottage.

Reta was the fourth-oldest of 10 children, and after working at a Charlottetown hotel and a lawyer's office, she left Prince Edward Island in her late teens and came to Halifax, where she worked as a housekeeper at the archbishop's residence. She then worked at the Victoria General Hospital and then married her husband Howard. They would go for milkshakes every night before he started his shift at MT&T.

I would like all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to honour the life of Mrs. Reta Smith.

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

KENNEDY, THOMAS "JEEP": COM. SERV. - CONGRATS.

JOHN WHITE: Family-run businesses are the cornerstone of Nova Scotia's economy. Today, I would like to recognize Thomas Kennedy, or "Jeep" as he is more commonly known in Glace Bay.

Jeep claims he has been involved in the building supplies business since he was just seven years old. Two facts are certain: Jeep has spent a lifetime in the building supplies industry, and he's been very successful at it. Cameron's Building Supplies is a strong, local family business with a 128-year history. Jeep took it over in 1977. Cameron's Building Supplies has survived significant economic downturns, and yet it continues to flourish.

Like many local businesses in our community, Cameron's is known for supporting fundraising events for sports teams, benefit dances, and many other community organizations.

Congratulations Jeep, and on behalf of our community, thank you very much.

[9:45 a.m.]

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

ORGANIZERS & VOLUN.: LAWN SUMMER NIGHTS - RECOG.

HON. BEN JESSOME: Today I'd like to recognize the team of volunteers and the large group of supporters who make the Lawn Summer Nights event, a fundraiser for the fight against cystic fibrosis, a successful event.

Every July, Thursdays during the week - so four times throughout the Summer - this group of volunteers and supporters get together at the St. Mary's Boat Club to do some lawn bowling. It's a fun and thoughtful way to keep up the fight against cystic fibrosis.

I'm proud to be part of a Legislature that has made Trikafta available to Nova Scotians, and I want to wish the team at Lawn Summer Nights Halifax future success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

FRALICK, KIM: ATHL. ASSOC. HALL OF FAME IND. - CONGRATS.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to Kim Fralick on her recent induction into the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

Kim, who grew up just outside Lunenburg, excelled as a basketball player at Mount Saint Vincent University. She played point guard for the Mystics and led the team to back-to-back Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association championships in 2003 and 2004 and was named the ACAA Player of the Year in 2002, 2003, and 2004. In her final season she was also named the CCAA women's basketball Player of the Year, becoming the first and only player from the ACAA to ever receive this award.

It is a true honour to have the opportunity to congratulate Kim on receiving this richly deserved recognition.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

BLINKHORN, SHERRY: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge local real estate owner Sherry Blinkhorn. Recently, Sherry opened a new location for her real estate firm in Stellarton. She bought and revamped an old, dilapidated location into a new and vibrant one. As well as being a successful realtor, Sherry is known for her support and advocacy for those with mental health issues. Sherry is also the recipient of countless awards within

the field of real estate, has travelled to New Orleans to rebuild houses after Hurricane Katrina, and has been the recipient of a Community Mentor Award, to name a few accomplishments.

We are so grateful to have Sherry as a member of our community.

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

KIWANIS CLUB OF COLE HBR.-DART.: COM. SERV. - THANKS

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge all the great work that the Kiwanis Club of Cole Harbour-Westphal does. And guess who's the head of the Cole Harbour Kiwanis Club? Murray Elliott, whom I spoke of earlier. I didn't have time to acknowledge that, but there's a great group of volunteers - very small - and they are all seniors. I wanted to point that out because at the end of the day, many people think this great park, with access to Morris Lake, is run by government, but it is not. It is run by volunteers. It's tireless and it's thankless, but they do provide it and it's a great amenity to everyone in the community, so I want to acknowledge all their hard work.

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

GIFFEN, OLIVIA & RILEY: EY AWD. RECIPS. - CONGRATS.

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, Coldstream Clear Distillery is a local spirits company with a vision to share celebrations and social experiences more broadly. This family business began with humble roots in a small community called Coldstream in September 2015. It has since expanded to having a warehouse and cannery in Truro and storefronts in Stewiacke, Antigonish, and Dartmouth Crossing.

Siblings and co-founders Olivia and Riley Giffen have recently been awarded the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2022 - Atlantic Region. This award recognizes economic vitality and finding new solutions to the world's growing challenges. These entrepreneurial siblings own one of only seven Atlantic Canada businesses to receive this award this year. The Atlantic winners will move forward to compete at the national awards celebration in November 2022.

I would like to congratulate Olivia and Riley Giffen on winning this much-deserved award, and ask the members of the House to join me in wishing them all the best at the nationals in November.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

FIREFIGHTING CREWS: HARD WORK - THANKS

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to recognize all those involved in the province's largest wildfire since 1976. The week of May 9th, we saw in my constituency - actually, in my backyard, in my community of Quinan - a forest fire grow to nearly 3,100 hectares.

To the crew of the 40 DNRRs, our provincial fire crews, the DNRR helicopter crews, the water bomber from Newfoundland and Labrador, the support from the Yarmouth County Regional EMO, the EHS crews, the province's public safety and field communications team, the Quinan Volunteer Fire Department, and the Salvation Army that stood up their mobile kitchen, which is state of the art, as well as all the local businesses that supported the efforts in my community - a big thank you.

I ask all members of the House to join me in extending my appreciation and their appreciation for the dedication, hard work, and commitment of all those involved.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

HERRON, KRISTY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an important member of our community in Digby County who recently passed away in a house fire. Kristy Herron was an active volunteer in her community and devoted her time to participating in clubs and acting on boards. Kristy was not only the constituent assistant for my father, the Honourable Gordon Balsler, former MLA for Digby-Annapolis, but she was a family friend, a mother, and a wife.

She was a hard worker and dedicated herself to giving back to her community in any possible way. She will be deeply missed. My heart goes out to her loved ones during this time of grief.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

VEINOT, JAYDA & KEEVAN: UNIV. SPORT CONTRIBS. - CONGRATS.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jayda and Keevan Veinot, twin sister and brother, of Port Williams, for their outstanding contributions to Atlantic university basketball. Jayda, an Acadia Axewoman wing, received the Atlantic University Sport regular season MVP award. She will represent Atlantic Canada at the U SPORTS Nationals in Kingston, Ontario.

Keevan, a Dalhousie Tigers basketball guard, averaged 23 points per game throughout the 2022 Atlantic University Sport Championship Weekend, leading the Tigers

to their win. Keevan was named the 2022 AUS first team all-star. Both siblings were named Subway Atlantic University Sports Athletes of the Week earlier this year.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Jayda and Keevan for their contributions to Atlantic university sport.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke.

SPARKS, JUDGE CORRINE: MSVU HON. DEG. RECIP. - CONGRATS.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge retired Judge Corrine Sparks. During the Spring 2022 convocation taking place at Mount Saint Vincent University, Judge Sparks was presented with an honorary degree.

In 1974, Judge Sparks was the only woman of African descent to graduate from Dalhousie Law School. She went on to co-manage the first all-female law firm in Nova Scotia. Judge Sparks also played a role in the creation of the African Nova Scotia Access to Justice judicial committee and served as a member of the Gender Equality Task Force of the Canadian Bar Association.

I'd like to ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Judge Sparks on another milestone.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

YOUNG, MICHAEL: MINISTER'S AWD. RECIP. - CONGRATS.

HON. ALLAN MAACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, let us recognize a young man from the Strait Area Education Recreation Centre in Port Hawkesbury who, in his graduating year, is on track to do great things in the world of music. Michael Young was one of four graduating students in Nova Scotia who earned a Minister's Award for Creative Excellence in the Arts.

Our Education and Early Childhood Development Minister presented the scholarship this past June. Michael received the Charlie A'Court scholarship for excellence in music, which includes a mentorship opportunity with A'Court.

Please join me in congratulating Michael and wishing him the very best in his future musical career.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

AVON VALLEY FLORAL: COMEBACK AFTER STORM - CONGRATS.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the incredible comeback that Avon Valley Floral has made since the devastating snow and ice storm of 2015. This storm led to 16 inches of snow and solid ice over the entire infrastructure, causing significant damage to the greenhouses and the heating system, eventually destroying seven of the 8.5 acres.

Today, after a new business plan was created, changes were made to modernize the greenhouse operations and improve logistics. They are now producing more crop revenue with less acreage, yet they are profiting from twice the revenue per square foot than before.

Avon Valley's three main customers are the six Costco warehouses in Atlantic Canada, Walmart and Kent Building Supplies.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members help me in congratulating CEO Kevin White, as well as all other Avon Valley Floral employees for returning a thriving local business back into a success story.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

HAWES, SOPHIE & GRACIE: BUS. SUCCESS - CONGRATS.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two St. Andrews sisters, Sophie and Gracie Hawes. Despite their young ages of 15 and 14, Sophie and Gracie have quite the entrepreneurial history. The two sisters have taken what started as a 4-H project and turned it into a business, putting their many skills to good use. This includes creating and selling beautifully decorated cakes, rope mats, matching scrunchies and mask sets, and even Christmas decorations.

An especially notable feat is their wool dryer balls, which are 100 per cent wool, 100 per cent Canadian, and 100 per cent environmentally friendly. Made with Canadian wool and containing recycled clothing cores, these reusable balls help fight wrinkles, prevent static, and soften clothes.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Sophie and Gracie on their success, and wish them all the best in their future entrepreneurial endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Shelburne.

MAHANNEY, SUZANNE: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

NOLAN YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Suzanne Mahaney, a well-known volunteer in the Town of Shelburne.

Suzanne has organized and participated in many events over the years, including Shelburne Celebrates Christmas, the Loyalist Landing in 2008, Christmas Stroll on Dock Street, and Miracle on Dock Street, to name a few.

In the Spring of 2020, Suzanne began volunteering as the museum director for the Shelburne Historical Society. In this role, she manages the Shelburne County Museum as well as two provincial sites - The Dory Shop and The Ross Thompson House.

Through her exceptional leadership, Suzanne has made a good organization even better. For that, I ask all members to join me in thanking Suzanne for her commitment to her community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

MURPHY, EMMA: UPROOTED MARKET & CAFÉ SUCCESS - RECOG.

KENT SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Emma Murphy, owner and operator of Uprooted Market & Cafe in Musquodoboit Harbour. Uprooted is a popular food market and café focused on improving the accessibility of local and sustainable food options on the Eastern Shore. This year marks Emma's seventh year in business.

It may not be known that Uprooted sells locally grown and produced goods such as fruit, vegetables, milk, free-run eggs, cheeses, yogurts, and grains, as well as environmentally friendly cleaning products and artisan soaps, and handcrafted products.

Throughout the pandemic and while the café was closed to the public, Emma rose to the challenge, establishing an online grocery order and delivery business. This responsive service was widely embraced by the community, and it helped to keep her business in operation during a challenging time.

I ask all members of the Assembly to acknowledge Emma's entrepreneurial spirit, and to congratulate her on the continued success as a small business owner on the Eastern Shore.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

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

THE SPEAKER: Yes, please.

GARY BURRILL: Thank you. I just wanted to introduce this morning guests in the House - Kaley Kennedy and Juniper Kennedy. Kaley was the director of the NDP provincial campaign last Summer and is our former chief of staff. Juniper Kennedy, I am

excited to say, arrived in the world about six months ago. So it is great to have Kaley and Juniper here. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations and best wishes. Welcome to the House.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

WAUGH, DAVID: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank David Waugh of Lower Sackville for his dedicated volunteerism in our community.

Following his retirement, David looked to volunteer in a role that would best suit his interests, which stemmed from spending his childhood on a farm. He chose to work on our local trails. David is now a board member and committee chair of the Sackville Rivers Association. In this role he spends his time patrolling, maintaining, and securing funds for trails in our community.

Through his tireless efforts in hosting many events, including tree planting, cleanups, and duck races, he helps provide necessary funds for the Sackville Rivers Association to help ensure the preservation of the Sackville Watershed.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking David Waugh for his dedication and commitment to the Sackville Rivers Association and our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

HAVRE BOUCHER STITCH 'N SEW GRP.: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. GREG MORROW: Mr. Speaker, I rise again to recognize the Havre Boucher Stitch N' Sew group. This group of talented quilters has been involved in initiatives such as a making lap quilts for Alzheimer's patients and comfort quilts for locals dealing with health challenges.

They have also made and filled Christmas stockings for local nursing homes and cosmetic bags for the Transition House in Port Hawkesbury. Recently, they were a part of the national Quilts of Valour Program that recognizes veterans. Two weeks ago, they presented local veteran Richard Breen with his very own Quilt of Valour.

I ask that members join me in thanking the Havre Boucher Stitch N' Sew group for their efforts to bring some comfort to those who may need it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

[10:00 a.m.]

CAs, SAs & GOVT. WORKERS: HARD WORK - THANKS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity, with the last few seconds of the morning, to thank all the CAs that have worked across the province, all the SAs, all the people in the various departments in government, including all the MLAs who work very hard for all Nova Scotians. Hopefully, they will enjoy this long weekend and recharge their batteries and back to work early in the week.

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

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule No. 43(1), I'm making a motion for an emergency debate.

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change that was adopted by 196 parties on December 12, 2015. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. We can't accept it because we haven't received notice. The Clerks have not received the notice. (Interruption)

We're going to check to make sure that no notice was received. If you'll just hold off until after Question Period, we'll have an answer.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

The time is 10:01 a.m. We will go to 10:51 a.m.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: COST OF LIVING CRISIS - INACTION

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the cost of common everyday essentials in this province keeps skyrocketing, with no end in sight. Putting gas in your vehicle will cost 60 per cent more. I'll table that. Putting food on the table is costing families \$1,000 more this year. I will table that. Heating a home costs 70 per cent more. I'll table that as well. It's no wonder that more and more Nova Scotians are being pushed down to the poverty line under this government's watch.

My question for the Premier: How many more Nova Scotians are now living in poverty due to this cost of living crisis and the government's inaction?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): We know that with a 40-year high in inflation, Nova Scotians, Canadians, and people across the world are really feeling it, really struggling. That's why we have taken a number of steps, including the CCA wage increase - I'll table that on the CCA wage increase. That's why we have taken steps with the MOST program to support young people working in the trades. I'll table that. We have put the Seniors Care Grant in place, made some improvements to the Seniors Care Grant eligibility yesterday. I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that recognizes the struggles of Nova Scotians. We are taking the actions that we can to support them because we feel for them, Mr. Speaker.

ZACH CHURCHILL: We know that the cost of living crisis is impacting Nova Scotians' ability to put healthy food and affordable food on their table, Mr. Speaker. Food banks are seeing client numbers double. I will table that. Community fridges are being emptied faster than they're filled. I will table that. Grocery stores are enhancing security because of increased food theft.

Still, I do not believe we have had enough substance from this government. The Premier couldn't even tell us how many more Nova Scotians have entered into poverty in this inflationary phase.

My question for the Premier: How many more Nova Scotians are now food-insecure due to this cost of living crisis and the government's inaction on food security?

THE PREMIER: We understand the impacts of inflation on energy, energy poverty, and food insecurity. We understand. That's why we have taken a number of steps to support Nova Scotians.

That's actually the reason we're pushing so hard on the \$10-a-day daycare. We know that will support so many Nova Scotian families. I know that as we push for affordable, accessible daycare for all Nova Scotians.

There are a number of members opposite who want to put themselves as MLAs at the front of the line for daycare. They actually want free daycare, but we're focused on all Nova Scotians on this side of the House. We want affordable, accessible daycare for every single Nova Scotian. That's where our focus is.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, just to point out, I think that characterization is unfounded. I will say however, that I'm very proud of the work particularly of the member for Sydney-Membertou, who did most of the work negotiating that \$10-a-day

child care when we were in government - again another Liberal initiative that this government is moving forward with that we're thankful for.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the cost of living pressures are having a greater impact than that as well. This cost of living crisis is causing more Nova Scotians not just to face food insecurity but also housing insecurity. Feed Nova Scotia, this province's largest and arguably most important security net, completed a survey and found that 85 per cent of clients were in core housing need, and of those, half were spending more than 50 per cent of their income on housing, and I'll table that.

My question to the Premier: How many more Nova Scotians are now homeless due to this cost of living crisis and this government's inaction?

THE PREMIER: Of course, the priorities of this government are well known to Nova Scotians - health care, affordable housing, addressing the cost of living crisis. I'm very proud of the work that the minister has done in housing - \$35 million to create 1,100 more affordable housing units. I'll table that.

The investments in making sure that we have projects moving forward, establishing a team in place who can get things approved to get moving forward, that's having an impact on housing builds, which will have an impact on access to housing. We know that the work the Minister of Community Services is doing around homelessness, around housing people, in supporting those in need of housing, it is - significant work is being done to that. So my message to Nova Scotians is: This is a government that understands and this is a government that is acting every single day to make sure they're supported.

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

PREM.: GHG REDUCTIONS PLAN - UPDATE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, after months of questions with no answers about how this government is going to meet federal requirements for greenhouse gas reductions, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change said, "I have, a few weeks ago, sent a letter to Ottawa to express our concerns with a federal carbon tax." Mr. Speaker, we are well into the throes of a climate crisis and at the eleventh hour of a federal deadline. It's not enough to simply say that the government has concerns. He can either agree to the carbon tax or create another plan.

If the government has a plan to meet our mandated greenhouse gas emission reductions, I'd like to ask the Premier: Where is it?

THE PREMIER: There's been significant discussion in this Chamber about the cost of living, about gasoline in particular. I'd like just to make sure the members of this House are aware that in Nova Scotia we have some of the cheapest gasoline in Atlantic Canada:

Newfoundland, \$1.96 a litre; P.E.I., \$1.87 a litre; New Brunswick, \$1.86 a litre; Nova Scotia, \$1.82. Some of the lowest in Canada, but we know that affordability is an issue. We know we need to keep the gas prices down, and we know that Nova Scotians cannot afford to add 14 cents a litre to the price of gasoline, so we're working with the federal government to protect Nova Scotians, to make sure that life is affordable for Nova Scotians. We'll work with the federal government on that, and I encourage the members opposite to get on board in supporting Nova Scotians and in keeping life affordable with them.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: We know that the climate is burning, we know that this planet will look different for our children than it does for us. We know that the cost of inaction is higher than the cost of action. The minister said, "We don't believe a federal carbon tax is appropriate." That might be true, but what is appropriate is addressing the climate crisis that is unfolding and ensuring that Nova Scotians can afford it.

We saw the cost of political posturing and denial in Alberta: an expensive lawsuit and forced implementation of the federal plan. We need immediate action from this government to transform our energy system and reduce greenhouse gases. Nova Scotians need the good jobs that this will create and the lower bills that will result. Mr. Speaker, if the Premier agrees that climate change is real - open question - and a pressing problem, will he explain how he is going to meet this target?

THE PREMIER: Everyone knows climate change is real. That's not a question, that's a cheap political shot, Mr. Speaker. Climate change is real, but what is also real is the affordability crisis that Nova Scotians are facing. On one hand, that becomes the main theme for the Opposition, but on the other hand it becomes, let's make life more unaffordable for Nova Scotians. The carbon tax will put 14 cents a litre on Nova Scotians. We think that is unacceptable.

I want to acknowledge some of the work that the prior government did under Premier McNeil's leadership. They went to the federal government and said, we're doing a lot in Nova Scotia, we don't need the carbon tax to do more. That worked, but that's expiring. That has a timeline. We are also going back to the federal government and saying, the carbon tax - 14 cents a litre on gasoline - won't help, but, federal government, you can help us with offshore wind, you can help us with hydrogen, we can work together.

I ask the members opposite to join us in working with the federal government to support Nova Scotians. We can have . . . (Interruption)

CLAUDIA CHENDER: The Premier wants to convince us that there are two options - affordability or tackling the climate crisis - but Nova Scotians know that this isn't true. We can solve the affordability crisis by tackling the climate crisis. It doesn't have to be a carbon tax. It can be our own solution. So far we have heard nothing about what the plan is.

We know that Nova Scotians believe this, and we know because we have been pushing for it and they have been pushing for it. We need a just transition. We need to help people retrofit their homes to lower their bills. Have we seen that? No. We need a universal service program so people can afford power. If you're concerned about the cost of energy and people's ability to pay, implement it today. We need to electrify our transportation systems, and we need, importantly, to stand up to Nova Scotia Power, which does not seem to be on the government agenda.

Yes, it's going to be difficult, and it's going to be complex, and the further down the road we go, the harder it will be, but writing a letter to Ottawa saying you don't want to do it is not leadership.

I will ask the Premier one last time: When will he table a plan to meet our national greenhouse gas emissions goal?

THE PREMIER: I completely disagree with the premise that nothing is being done. There are a number of off-oil initiatives in this province. There are a number of initiatives that are happening in this province.

What I would say to the member opposite is that on this side of the House, we're not okay with the price of gasoline going up 14 cents when the options are taking on major projects that can be transformational for our economy, for our environment, and for our society over a number of years. Offshore wind, hydrogen - we have some of the best offshore wind speeds in the world. We have the Bay of Fundy. It's completely untapped.

These are the things we want to do, and I encourage the members opposite to stop with the rhetoric and get on board with positivity.

THE SPEAKER: I'm going to ask that members try to respect the time allotted for questions and answers. I'll grant a few seconds every once in awhile, but it's really being pushed beyond the limit at this point. Please respect that.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

AGRIC.: FOOD INSECURITY - ACTION

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: While we want to be helpful and encouraged about the future, when the Premier says he wants everyone to be positive like all Nova Scotians, I have to remind the Premier that there are Nova Scotians who are going to the grocery store now, and grocery stores are now sources of major anxiety for people because it's costing them more money to feed their family. As one of the most critical social determinants of health, food insecurity is directly connected to poor health outcomes.

When can we see some leadership from a Premier who said he would fix health care but has done nothing to help people stay healthier during this cost of living crisis?

HON. GREG MORROW: The government doesn't control food prices in the grocery store. Those are set by retailers. What we can do is support our producers, our farmers, and we are doing that through the Nova Scotia Loyal program, which we just announced recently. We're supporting farmers as they make investments to be more sustainable and competitive. We have new programs to help offset the cost of production that don't influence the price of food at the grocery store, but we can work with our colleagues in the Department of Community Services and in the Department of Health and Wellness to help, where possible, with emergency responses. That's what we're doing to help Nova Scotians.

ZACH CHURCHILL: What Nova Scotia Loyal program? We have yet to see this program initiated in our province almost a year into the mandate of this government, similar to almost every other single promise that this government has made. The Better Pay Cheque Guarantee, promised on the first day of their government, and all the promises on health care - we have yet to see any of these things come to fruition almost a year into the mandate of this government.

Feed Nova Scotia has recently found that 80 per cent of food bank clients identified lack of income and the cost of living as the major reasons behind their food insecurity. One in six households in this province have inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial pressures, and I'll table that.

My question to the Premier - who used to have a lot more stamina, I remember, when he was in Opposition for answering questions or spending time in Question Period - is: How many more Nova Scotians must become food-insecure before this government actually acts to support them and help them be healthier to avoid more pressure on the health care system?

HON. GREG MORROW: The Nova Scotia Loyal announcement was made at Masstown Market just a few weeks ago. Nova Scotians are excited by this, consumers are excited. The farmers I meet on their farms are excited to take part in this, to get more local food in grocery stores and be part of this program.

Just recently, we announced that we're going to cover the planned increase to the cost of school milk, which is going to help students in the new school year. These are all things we are doing, Mr. Speaker. They're right out there in public.

AGRIC: FOOD SECURITY ACTION - UPDATE

ZACH CHURCHILL: Food insecurity and food costs are impacting every corner of this province, not just in urban Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, but also in rural Nova Scotia.

Since this government took office in late August, access to food banks in rural Nova Scotia has increased by nearly 50 per cent - higher than the increase we've seen in Halifax, in rural Nova Scotia. Yet this government stands up and champions all the great work they are doing while things are actually getting worse.

[10:15 a.m.]

My question to the Premier, the former Leader of the Official Opposition, is: Why are rural Nova Scotians continuing to be left behind and hungry because of this government's inaction on food security?

GREG MORROW: Getting more local food in our grocery stores is what is going to solve these problems and that's what we're working on right now with our farmers. We're implementing a number of programs that will help reduce their costs in the field, that will translate into grocery stores.

I want to go back to Nova Scotia Loyal, Mr. Speaker. If the member opposite doesn't believe that people are excited about this and that this is going to help, I'll quote Laurie Jennings, the owner of Masstown Market: "Supporting local businesses and working together through Nova Scotia Loyal can only help to improve Nova Scotians' food security, protecting our communities and the businesses that supply them." I'll table that.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the government's answer to food security is to have a points program. How are people going to get the points if they can't afford to pay for the food to begin with?

Mr. Speaker, our rural communities are becoming food deserts in many circumstances. Access to a grocery store, co-op, or food bank requires driving upwards of an hour for some parts of Nova Scotia. With the cost of fuel going up, that means some folks are choosing between going to the grocery store or having hungry bellies.

My question for the Premier: Why must some rural Nova Scotians continue to have empty gas tanks or bellies because of this government's inaction?

GREG MORROW: I'll go through some of the programs I mentioned yesterday that we're doing to help reduce costs on the field for farmers that will help reduce food costs in the long run: the Limestone trucking assistance program that was recently announced; the wild Blueberry Pollination Expansion Program; and we've offered deferred loan payments through the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board and reduced insurance costs to help free up cash flow. These are all things that are helping.

Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I was in Saskatoon with my provincial counterparts and the federal minister where we negotiated a 25 per cent funding increase to the funding

envelope that will bring \$9.25 million in federal funding to Nova Scotia, a 25 per cent increase from the last agreement.

All these things are going to help, Mr. Speaker.

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

MAH: HOMELESS NUMBERS - UPDATE

LORELEI NICOLL: It's evident that new housing options are not able to keep pace with the rapidly growing homeless population in this province. They cannot be built fast enough or affordable enough.

In the Fall the Minister of Community Services said that we do know we have about 1,000 people in this province who are homeless – and I will table that.

My question for the minister is: What is the number of homeless Nova Scotians in this province today?

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question. The housing crisis across the province is of great concern for us and we recognize the number of homeless.

On behalf of the Minister of Community Services I want to highlight some of the great projects - for instance, The Overlook, which will soon be open this Fall, we'll open up soon to provide more space; and we put an extra \$10 million into helping address the homeless crisis and we're deeply concerned about it right across the province.

LORELEI NICOLL: There are more than 586 chronically homeless individuals in HRM. In a recent survey, United Way found that 55 per cent of those chronically homeless individuals found themselves homeless within the past six months under this government's watch. I will table that. The cost of living crisis is driving people out of their homes and onto the streets.

My question for the Premier: Why is the number of homeless Nova Scotians continuing to grow?

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, this is a concern to us. Through our department, we have invested in a number of community organizations that help with homelessness. We have invested in things like Akoma, Souls Harbour, and the North End Community Health Centre to provide more housing for those who are - deeply affordable housing. We're working across the spectrum.

As the member would know, we recently announced two different programs to provide more affordable housing and to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing. We're investing in the co-operative sector. There are many things that we're doing, and we will continue to do more.

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

AGRIC.: FARMERS' CHALLENGES - ACTION

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Farmers in Nova Scotia are struggling. They are on the front lines of climate change. Prices of fertilizer, diesel, and herbicides have doubled or tripled the last six months.

Richard Melvin is a fifth-generation farmer in Canning who almost didn't plant this year. He said, "In normal times, we're used to dealing with 1 and 2 per cent per annum inflation. This year, everything we're touching is up 10, 12, 15, 20, 25 per cent. So it's kind of like a tsunami of cost increases that we're dealing with."

Mr. Speaker, why is this government ignoring the challenges that farmers are facing?

HON. GREG MORROW: The government isn't ignoring this. I just listed a number of programs that we . . . (Interruption) I can do them again if we want.

Look, we're all feeling the impact of rising costs. Agriculture is no different. The member mentioned fuel prices have hit historic highs, industry-specific costs - crop protectants and fertilizer - up as much as 50 per cent. We have implemented targeted support programs to help our farmers, to help our producers in the field. We have done these things. I can list them over and over again, but to say the government is ignoring them is incorrect, Mr. Speaker.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I saw the announcement at Masstown of the Nova Scotia Loyal program. It's still not clear to me - and I don't think it's clear to Nova Scotians - what the plan is for that program. It's not going to help farmers this year who didn't plant or who won't exist anymore next year. Some farmers say they don't even know why they're bothering to plant this year. They know it will be a loss.

Tim Marsh has been farming for 20 years. He says, "I know of a lot of producers that are literally waiting until this Fall to see where their books end up as to whether or not they're going to be able to go another year." This is an apt prediction. According to Statistics Canada, farm acreage declined by 20 per cent in Nova Scotia between 2016 and 2021.

Mr. Speaker, almost two months ago the minister said the government was looking for ways to help. He's outlined some options. What else is the government planning to do?

GREG MORROW: Look, the member mentioned the list. I can run through them again. We're always looking at ways to help our farmers break down those barriers.

I'll say about Tim Marsh - Tim Marsh has been a good friend to me in the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. We have had these conversations about rising costs, and he acknowledges that these are worldwide issues that you can't help. But there are programs that we have put in place: the Limestone Trucking Assistance Program, the Blueberry Pollination Expansion Program, deferred loans through the Farm Loan Board.

Nova Scotia Loyal, as the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board mentioned yesterday - you can't just unroll that. There are trade issues. You have to be trade-compliant. There are a lot of factors that go into this. We're always looking at ways to help farmers.

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

DHW: NSHA CEO APPT. - EXPLAIN

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Speaking of good friends, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a concerning trend from this government. It's a trend where qualified subject matter experts from diverse backgrounds with relevant career experiences are being dismissed from their positions and replaced with personal friends of the Premier. I'll table that.

This trend began on Day 1 of the Houston government, when a personal friend of the Premier's and former senior Progressive Conservative political staffer was hand-picked to serve as the CEO of the Nova Scotia Health Authority, replacing a proven medical leader, Dr. Brendan Carr. I will table that.

I would like to ask the Premier: What medical experience did this friend have prior to being hand-picked to lead our health authority?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is tell you again about the expertise that sits on that health leadership team who are, for the first time, meeting with Department of Health and Wellness and Nova Scotia Health, stewarding our health care system. We have a registered nurse with over 40 years' experience in health care. She is a global health care consultant (Interruption) . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MICHELLE THOMPSON: We have an executive leader with global experience in logistics who has achieved results in a complex, multi-disciplinary, and multi-stakeholder

environment. We have a clinician who has been working for 33 years. We have a senior civil servant - and if we are going to celebrate women, we celebrate them all. We have a very capable . . .

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

PATRICIA ARAB: There was no answer in that regarding the CEOs, so we will move forward.

Dr. Brendan Carr was appointed to lead our health authority after an extensive, year-long national search to find a medical leader with the unique and necessary qualifications that Nova Scotians deserve to have at the helm of their health authority. He was selected on his merits, not on friendships.

We searched nationally to find the right leader for our health authority. This Premier looked at his hand-picked transition team. My question for the Premier is: Why does friendship outweigh medical experience?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, when we came into government, we knew we needed a new way in order to move the health care system forward. We took a team of very capable individuals. All of these skills come together in order to make the multiple decisions that we've made in the last number of weeks changing the health care system, transforming it for the first time in a number of years. The people on that team are absolutely world-renowned and they are more than capable of leading our health care system to where we need it to go.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

EMO: GASOLINE LEAK - PREPARATION

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, this is a question closer to home.

As folks would know, in Sydney we had a very dangerous situation happen in the last few weeks. We saw 600,000 litres of gasoline that leaked from one of the facilities in the middle of a neighbourhood in Sydney. It was a big concern for residents in the area, especially when we realized the right equipment wasn't on site to actually deal with the spill at the time.

There have been a lot of conversations with Imperial Oil about what happened, and we are waiting for the report to come back. My first question is to the Minister responsible for the Office of Emergency Management. What conversations has the minister had with the CBRM and with Imperial to make sure that in the event of a leak, the proper equipment is in place to support and keep the community safe?

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As the member knows, the first line of EMO response is at the municipal level. When the event was happening, our EMO response reached out to the municipal level and had contacted them. The matter was in hand, but since then there have certainly been ongoing conversations about that.

I would like to say that this type of event is of huge concern to us, and we are very fortunate it was not a more serious event. We are very fortunate that the whole thing didn't ignite, and we are very thankful for that. We recognize the concerns of the residents and the community in the seriousness of the matter. It certainly is the subject of ongoing conversation.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that, because the minister's staff did reach out when it happened. The big concern really for a lot of us was that the equipment wasn't there to deal with the event. The foam truck wasn't there, and they actually had to go to the airport to get it. So I hope that the department has that conversation with the CBRM and with Imperial to ensure that equipment is on-site.

My follow-up question is to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. I've had a conversation with him previously, but the residents are looking for information. They feel like there has been a lack of information since the event. The community has met a number of times. We had a community meeting last week. Really, the more information we can provide at this point, the better for the residents.

My question to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is: Has his staff been into the neighbourhood speaking with the residents, and what information or update can he provide to the residents today?

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Absolutely. I want the honourable member to know that environment officials have been monitoring the situation, working with Imperial Oil. A report is forthcoming in terms of what has transpired here. We're expecting that report within four to six weeks.

I would like the honourable member to know that the Environment and Climate Change staff in the Sydney office are always available to work with you and the residents that you represent to ensure that there's clarity. Our job is to monitor the remediation, the cleanup.

I want to assure the honourable member those officials at the Sydney office are just a phone call away. If there are ever any issues, reach out to me directly.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

[10:30 a.m.]

DED: PATRONAGE - EXPLAIN

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, it's not only health care where we continue to see this trend of partisan patronage play out with this government. Just this week, the Premier fired three highly qualified CEOs with years of experience, replacing them with two individuals the Premier himself, as we know, has described as his personal friends he has known for a very long time.

I must ask the Premier: Why is he bringing back this disturbing practice of firing experts in key positions and replacing them with his personal friends?

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I feel that what hasn't gotten across here - there has been so much obsessiveness on the people in these positions, which are interim positions, but actually no one has pushed back on the basic concept of taking five organizations and folding them into two hyper-focused organizations. It's simple math. With two organizations, there were not places for all of our CEOs. This was not a report card. This was teeing up Nova Scotia for the future.

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians have worked very hard over the past few decades. Governments of all stripes have worked very hard over the past few decades to get away from the days of patronage, partisanship and pork barrel politics. We see it is coming back with a vengeance. When asked where the names for consideration for these Crown corporation positions came from, Deputy Minister Langley said, quote, "the Premier's office."

I would like to ask the Premier - and I would appreciate the Premier to answer, considering he's very involved in this - does he believe this is a fair hiring practice?

SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: As the Premier himself has said, he was involved in the hiring. I believe he has also said that he looked at a number of candidates. While not ultimately the decision-maker, I was involved, as were members of my department. I must tell you that the two individuals who have been selected to transition to these new organizations have incredible experience and incredible resumés. I couldn't be more confident in their abilities to move forward. The best candidates should always be in the job.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

PREM.: HOUSE SITTING ON EMANC. DAY - PREVENT

SUZY HANSEN: My question has only one part and it is for the Premier. On Monday, Nova Scotia will mark the second annual Emancipation Day. Emancipation Day

is the day when the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 became law across the British Empire, including in Canada, on August 1, 1834. On this day, the practice of slavery officially ended for millions of African people and their descendants in Canada and around the world. The day is a time to reflect and acknowledge our shared history of the enslavement of people of African descent in Canada. It is our understanding that the government is contemplating calling House hours on this important day, Monday, which is a profoundly disturbing prospect.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier give this House his assurance that he would not, in fact, allow this House to sit on Emancipation Day?

THE PREMIER: As the member has pointed out, and I completely agree, this is an incredibly important day, for sure. There will be a number of events around the province, and it's historic - lots of events through the month. We encourage Nova Scotians to become aware, encourage Nova Scotians to participate in the process, and we have the utmost respect for the significance of the day. There can be no question about that.

It's my hope that the business of the House can wrap up today, Mr. Speaker.

SUZY HANSEN: I didn't get an answer so I'm going to ask again. I'm not going to speak the whole context because I think we've heard a lot about Emancipation Day and how important it is. Even more so, we've heard how important it is for African Nova Scotians to be able to reflect and have that time with each other on a day that is marked specifically for them.

I am asking the Premier. I don't want to hear, "you know" and "we hope" - all of that good stuff - because we all hope that we get out of here and get the work done that Nova Scotians want us to do, done in an efficient manner. I'm asking you: Are we not going to sit on Emancipation Day?

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'll ask the member to refer to the person not as "you" but, in that case, the Premier.

SUZY HANSEN: I want to ask, if we don't get out of here today, that we do not sit on Emancipation Day, Monday.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, we've acknowledged the terrible impact of the slave trade and its role in Nova Scotia's history over 400 years. We recognize August 1st as Emancipation Day. It's an important time for all Nova Scotians to learn more about this part of our history - a part of our history that we're certainly not proud of.

To show our support, this government opened three satellite offices in Nova Scotia - one in Digby, one in New Glasgow, one in Preston. We have had significant progress

with the Land Titles Initiative, Equity and Anti-Racism strategy, health race-based data, IPP assessments. Mr. Speaker, we certainly have . . .

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

PREM.: DEP. MINISTER FIRING - EXPLAIN

HON. IAIN RANKIN: The Premier also fired Dr. Késa Munroe-Anderson, Deputy Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage and African Nova Scotian Affairs. For those who don't know, Dr. Munroe-Anderson is a brilliant, strong, Black woman. She brought passion and a unique approach to leadership and came to us from the Human Rights Commission, and was tasked with race relations, director. She was the first Black deputy minister of this department.

My question for the Premier is: Why was this decision made?

THE PREMIER: Across the civil service, there are a number of incredibly impressive people who are doing public service, providing public service to Nova Scotians. We respect every single one of them. We admire their work and their professionalism.

As a new government, we've seen this week that we made some structural changes to economic development in this province. As a new government, we made some structural changes to the operations of government. We have to put a system in place that we believe, as a sitting government, sets up Nova Scotia moving forward.

I won't comment specifically on human resource issues, other than to say that we thank all members. There were a number of personnel changes that were made. We respect every single one of those individuals, but as the government, we have an obligation to taxpayers to put the structure in place that we believe best suits Nova Scotians.

IAIN RANKIN: What made this worse is that the person was not replaced by someone from the Black community after that historic appointment. It was seen as a step backwards for many, Mr. Speaker, and a disregard for the advance of women and people of colour in positions of leadership.

In response - and this is something that I think John Buchanan would be proud of, and John Savage is probably rolling in his grave - they created a new position to appoint someone who ran for the Progressive Conservative Party two times, as an associate deputy minister, as damage control.

My question for the Premier is: When he is assessing people, appointing people to leadership positions, why is it that they have to be friends or affiliated with the Progressive Conservative Party?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I continue to be surprised by the quickness and the sharpness of the Opposition to smear incredibly talented Nova Scotians. To say that somebody was put in a position as damage control - somebody with the qualifications of that individual, somebody with the integrity of that individual - is completely unacceptable. I won't accept that type of statement, and Nova Scotians shouldn't accept it either, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

FTB: RESPONSE TO COST OF LIVING CRISIS - JUSTIFY

BRAEDON CLARK: All week, myself and I think many members on the Opposition side have been confused by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board's response to the cost of living crisis.

We know that the Province can't do anything about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We know the Province doesn't set interest rates. We also know that the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board is responsible for a \$13 billion budget. You would think, based on his answers this week, that the minister's advice for Nova Scotians is to cross their fingers and hope for the best.

The minister and this government have the tools to help Nova Scotians in their time of need, but instead are choosing to focus on what they can't control rather than what they can.

I'd like to ask the minister: Is he satisfied with his government's response to the affordability crisis?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I can tell you something we can control, and I wonder if the Opposition will help us. Past Liberal governments in this province had a pretty sweet deal with their federal party friends. They were able to mute most of the impact of carbon taxes not because of anything they ever did, but because Nova Scotians have been paying higher power rates for green energy added to the grid when wind power was more expensive. The sweet deal ends in December.

The federal government has made carbon taxes the law. Will the provincial Liberals support Nova Scotians dealing with the high cost of living by joining this provincial government in asking for a delay in carbon taxes at a period of time when we are in an extremely high inflation environment?

BRAEDON CLARK: Perhaps the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board spent too long in Opposition and forgets that it is the job of the government to take action. It is the job of the Opposition to point out inadequacies and failures.

Our caucus has introduced six bills this emergency session that deal with the cost of living crisis. I don't expect the government will take action on any of them, so it is a bit rich for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to pass the buck to this side of the House when the ball rests squarely on that side.

The real emergency, Mr. Speaker, is this government's lack of a clear, cohesive, and serious response to the fact that people in our province are struggling every day. All we have seen so far this week is an enhancement to the Seniors Care Grant, which is a good program, but it is underutilized and applies to only a small percentage of the population.

I'd like to ask the minister: What would it take for this government to enact broad-based support for Nova Scotians, or should they just give up and hope for help from somewhere else?

ALLAN MACMASTER: The truth is the NDP and the Liberals want Nova Scotians to pay more at the gas pump. We've just talked about an action we've taken . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Over 14 cents more per litre in just a few months. They have bills on the Order Paper. The member for Northside-Westmount wants to cut provincial gas taxes.

I wonder if the people of Northside-Westmount know that he and his party want to drive up the price of gas by more than 14 cents per litre in the coming months, because they won't take action and support this government in standing up for Nova Scotians. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: I just want to make one point in response to the answer from the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. To suggest that the Liberals and the NDP want Nova Scotians to pay 14 cents more at the pump is ridiculous . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. You had your two questions. You can't make a statement in response. (Interruption). This is a new question? According to the lineup, the Independent member ... (Interruption).

The honourable member for Bedford South on a new question.

FTB: FUEL COST INCREASE RESPONSE - CLARIFY

BRAEDON CLARK: I just want to make the point here that it is absurd for the Minister of Finance to suggest that the NDP and the Liberals want to see Nova Scotians pay 14 cents more at the pumps when members of the government, when in Opposition, voted against the very same cap-and-trade system that they are so happy to defend now.

THE SPEAKER: Is there a question?

BRAEDON CLARK: Does the minister sincerely believe that the Liberals and the NDP want to see Nova Scotians pay 14 cents more at the pumps?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Yes, I do, and the proof is that the two parties in front of us today will not join us in calling for a delay in carbon tax at this time. That is action. What we see here is inaction, and it raises a logical fact: They would rather see Nova Scotians be punished by even higher taxes, higher prices at the gas pump . . . (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Unless they join us today, it is logic - it is fact - that they do want to see Nova Scotians pay more at the pump. In a time of . . . (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North. (Interruption)

The Clerk has informed me that the member from Cumberland North can't take the supplemental question from the member for Bedford South. If you want to trade later on - but remember, there's five minutes left.

The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Clerk for clarifying that point.

I just want to remind the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and Deputy Premier that it is the job of the government to take action to advocate on behalf of the provincial government and the people of Nova Scotia to the federal government. I'm sure he will do that, but it is our job to point out where there are failings and where there are shortcomings.

I would ask the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board: Does he regret his vote in the past against the cap-and-trade system that he now seems so intent on keeping?

[10:45 p.m.]

ALLAN MACMASTER: I see the member didn't even want to ask the question, because I think what I asked back stopped him in his tracks. They have a hard time with the logic, Mr. Speaker, but I'll say this . . . (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury has the floor.

ALLAN MACMASTER: I will tell you the federal government doesn't even want provinces removing fuel excise taxes because they will mute the impact of the carbon tax. What we're concerned about right now is that Nova Scotians are feeling the pain at the pump. We are taking action by asking the government to delay at this time because people are hurting. That's who we're concerned about. We're taking action. Will the Opposition join us? I guess not.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

EECD: ECE WAGE INCREASE - UPDATE

SUZY HANSEN: My question is for the Premier. With the third-highest rate of inflation in Canada last month, workers in our province are falling farther and farther behind.

As the government fails to act on supporting working families, early childhood educators are speaking out. It was my great pleasure to join some of these educators on Tuesday as they rallied outside this building. We heard that early childhood educators are quitting their jobs because they can no longer afford to get to work. We heard that child care centres are losing spaces, unable to find educators, and are closing their doors. We heard that Nova Scotia won't truly have accessible child care until our early childhood educators are paid a living wage.

When will the Premier make sure that every early childhood educator is paid a living wage?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: After decades of inaction on ECE wages, I am honoured and excited to be moving forward to improve compensation that we pay to our early childhood educators. They are the backbone of our child care system in Nova Scotia, and they have been fighting for decades to see a raise. Under our government, we will be providing them with that. I look forward to implementing a compensation framework this year to support them and to value them in the way that they should be valued.

SUZY HANSEN: I'm really grateful that what you're saying is action now. Is that today? Because that's what we're asking. We're asking for these people to be paid what

they're worth today, and if we can say, after all these many years this is what you're showing, then do it now. Action speaks louder than words.

Mr. Speaker, early childhood educators are burning out. Families can't access child care because educators can't afford to put gas in their cars. There's no child care without early childhood educators. My question is: When exactly, what day, will ECEs get a raise? I'm hearing today.

BECKY DRUHAN: Every single day my department is working towards implementing wage increases for our early childhood educators, and every minute that I'm here, I'm not in the department supporting them with that.

I am looking forward to getting back to the department, moving this ahead, so I can deliver increased wages to our ECEs and value them in the way that they should have been valued for the past number of decades, while we had a Liberal government that didn't give them raises and an NDP government that didn't give them raises. This work is coming and I look forward to making that announcement. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Well, after all that excitement, especially the last 20 minutes, we'll take a 10-minute recess and then come back, and we'll move into government business. A 10-minute recess, please - everybody be in your seats at 11:00 a.m.

[10:51 a.m. The House recessed.]

[11:05 a.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honorable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie on an introduction.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I'd like to direct the members' attention to the West Gallery, where we have among us a dedicated public servant, the executive director of the Office of Acadian Affairs. Parmi nous ce matin, je vois le directeur général du bureau des Affaires acadiennes et Francophonie, Mark Bannerman. Welcome to the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Indeed, we welcome all visitors to the House at any time.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule 43(1), I am making a motion for an emergency debate.

Mr. Speaker, the Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change that was adopted by 196 Parties on December 12, 2015. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees and preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this, countries aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve net zero by 2050.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was asked to create a special report in response to the Paris Agreement. The report's main conclusion is that the world faces unavoidable multiple climate hazards over the next two decades with global warming of 1.5 degrees.

The government brought forward a budget in which funding for the Department of Environment and Climate Change is actually less than the year before, and the much-anticipated climate risk assessment is long overdue. It became even clearer yesterday and then again today in Question Period that the minister opposes the carbon tax, but has no clear alternative planned to meet the reductions required. Meanwhile, ocean temperatures are rising, and extreme heat events are becoming more and more common.

Mr. Speaker, this is an emergency that requires immediate government action. People are already living through serious weather events caused by the climate crisis. Across the country, and indeed around the globe, people can witness extreme heat and out-of-control wildfires. This has destroyed people's homes and put the health of vulnerable people at risk.

Therefore, I wish to move that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance. That matter is the clear and present emergency that is impacting people's lives today and will continue into the future if left unaddressed.

THE SPEAKER: In determining whether a matter should have urgent consideration, it's necessary for me to have regard to the extent to which it concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government or could come within the scope of ministerial action. I shall also regard the probability of the matter being debated by the House within a reasonable time by other means.

As a result of that, when we checked the Order Paper, there are numerous bills presented during an earlier session and this session that deal with the climate situation. I will not be willing to accept the emergency debate at this time.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, we're about to move into Committee of the Whole House on Bills for Bill No. 185. Before we do that, I am asking for unanimous

consent to be permitted to call Bill No. 185 for third reading directly after Committee of the Whole House.

THE SPEAKER: The request is for unanimous consent for third reading of Bill No. 185. (Interruption) It is for unanimous consent to call for third reading after Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

The request is for unanimous consent for Committee of the Whole House to go to third reading of Bill No. 185.

Is it agreed?

I hear a No.

The motion is defeated.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: We will take a 15-minute recess for things to be set up.

[11:31 a.m. The House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills with Deputy Speaker Lisa Lachance in the Chair.]

[1:37 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. The Speaker, Hon. Keith Bain, resumed 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 bill:

Bill No. 185 - House of Assembly Act.

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

THE CHAIR: Ordered that this bill be read a third time on a future day.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again Tuesday, August 2nd between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn and meet again on Tuesday, August 2nd from 3:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Thanks, everyone. The House stands adjourned. Enjoy your weekend.

[The House rose at 1:38 p.m.]