



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain

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First Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2022

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2022

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

11:00 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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Committee on Private and Local Bills, I am directed to report that the committee has met and discussed the following bill:

Bill No. 205 - St. Francis Xavier University Act (amended).

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House without amendments.

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

The honourable member for Richmond.

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health, I am pleased to submit the annual report of the committee for the period September 2021 to August 2022.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

FRED TILLEY: Today I rise on a point of order. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank rose on a point of order regarding a question I had asked on October 19th. He indicated that a document wasn't tabled and that the document doesn't exist.

Mr. Speaker, although I didn't quote directly from that document, I have it here today and I'll read an excerpt from it. "The Premier's Office violated access law twice. Tricia Ralph released two reports last Friday and in each she found the Premier's Office violating . . ."

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. That is not really a point of order, but if the member would like to table that, that is all that is required at this point.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

FRED TILLEY: I would like to table the document, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to ask the member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank to apologize to this House, as the Minister of Advanced Education, for not doing his homework and indicating that a story was manufactured.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour Relations.

RESOLUTION NO. 417

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I read this in my capacity as the Minister of Labour Relations.

Whereas the government is committed to fair and respective collective bargaining;
and

Whereas support workers in the education sector play a critical role in our public education system; and

Whereas the government is committed to engaging with labour differently, and collective bargaining is the best place for solutions to present themselves;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House endorse a process that will lead to wage parity across the education entities.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 233 - An Act to Make Public Information Respecting the Need a Family Practice Registry. (Hon. Zach Churchill)

Bill No. 234 - An Act to Amend Chapter 21 of the Acts of 2021, the Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act. (Suzy Hansen)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

COL. HOSP. AUX.: 100 YRS. OF SERV. - CONGRATS.

DAVE RITCEY: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Colchester Hospital Auxiliary on their remarkable 100 years of service to our community.

The Colchester Hospital Auxiliary is a fundamental organization to the Town of Truro, Millbrook First Nation, and the County of Colchester as a whole. Through their tireless efforts, they provide patient care and comforts, as well as the inspirational financial commitment for the benefit of patients and staff of the Colchester East-Hants Health Centre.

This 100-year milestone is a direct reflection of the passionate work and dedication of our incredible volunteers. I know this personally, as my grandmother Mary Ritcey and my mother, Betty Ritcey, were valued members of this community organization for many years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank these dedicated volunteers on their unwavering support for our community and congratulate the Colchester Hospital Auxiliary again on their 100 years in operation.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount:

POWER, PURVIE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, today I rise on a sad occasion to recognize a life of a lifelong friend of mine, Purvie Power.

Purvie was a kind, kind soul. He would give you the shirt off his back and he was always there in times of need for everyone else. He's a long-time member of the Branch 8 Legion, served as a member of the Cape Breton Highlanders, and was a member of the Local 92 labour union for many years.

Mr. Speaker, addiction and mental health is a serious problem in Nova Scotia. Many people don't have the access to the help that they need in order to overcome these demons. I wouldn't want Purvie to pass in vain. I would ask all of us in the House to please remember Purvie and please let's do better for mental health and addictions in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The two members for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier. (Applause)

DAUGHTER, ISLA QUINN: BIRTH - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction. Today I would like to introduce my daughter Isla Quinn, and my long-suffering partner Matthew and our daughter Rory. They're in the gallery. (Applause)

On July 12, 2022, Rory Christine became a big sister when Isla Quinn came into the world. On July 13th, Rory turned 3. Their dad and I are incredibly lucky and grateful for these two beautiful children who are fierce, strong, and a wee bit stubborn. I don't know where they get that from. They are incredibly kind.

I ask all members to please welcome them to the House. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: Indeed, welcome to everyone. I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot of Isla in the House from now on.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

ST. ANDREW'S PRESB. CHURCH: 200TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, is an important part of the fabric of Pictou and surrounding area.

On October 30th, the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of its inception with a special worship service. This special worship service will have guest speaker Reverend Doctor Glen Matheson as well as special music and guests.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on their 200th anniversary.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

NADEAU, DAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

RONNIE LEBLANC: Monsieur le président, j'aimerais profiter de cette occasion pour rendre hommage au vétéran de la force policière de la Gendarmerie royale du Canada Dan Nadeau, qui est décédé soudainement le 16 août dernier.

Né à Edmundston et adopté par la communauté acadienne de Clare lors qu'il était en poste dans les années 1990s, Dan était un entraîneur sportif pour plusieurs générations d'athlètes dans la communauté, une source d'inspiration pour plusieurs comme entraîneur d'équipe de volleyball, golf et de tir à la cible. Le cœur de Dan était toujours ouvert à aider quelqu'un. Il a laissé sa marque sur plusieurs générations d'athlètes.

Monsieur le président, je demande à tous les membres de se joindre à moi pour adresser nos sincères condoléances à la famille, amis et à la communauté sportive de Dan Nadeau.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police veteran Dan Nadeau, who passed away suddenly on August 16th.

Born in Edmundston and adopted by the Acadian community of Clare, where he was posted in the 1990s, Dan was a sports coach for several generations of athletes in the community. An inspiration to many as a coach of volleyball, golf, and target shooting teams, Dan's heart was always open to helping someone and he leaves his mark on many generations of athletes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in extending our sincere condolences to Dan Nadeau's family, friends, and his supporting community.

[11:15 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

CLANNON, JOAN: RICH. VOL. OF MO. - CONGRATS.

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Today I would like to acknowledge Joan Clannon, who was Richmond County's Volunteer of the Month for July. Joan is one of the key individuals who operates the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #150. She is actively involved in their delicious monthly breakfasts and Fish Fridays. She also contributes to the banner program for the veterans that gets displayed on Remembrance Day.

Joan is also an active member of the Isle Madame Historical Society, the Petit de Grat Beautification Society, and is treasurer for the Pay It Forward Angel Fund. Many residents of Richmond County have benefited from her dedication to the area. Please join me in a round of applause for Joan Clannon for all her good work in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

RAFUSE, REV. CHERYL: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Reverend Cheryl Rafuse of Whites Lake. Reverend Cheryl Rafuse is a deacon with St. Timothy's Anglican Church in Hatchet Lake, and St. Paul Anglican Church in Terence Bay. In addition to her ministerial duties, Reverend Cheryl is a warm and caring person who goes out of her way to serve the people of her community.

As a long-time volunteer with the Prospect Road Community Food Share Program, Reverend Cheryl worked tirelessly to provide food for those in the community who were experiencing food insecurity, especially during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Reverend Cheryl spreads joy wherever she goes with her kind heart and warm smile. She gives freely of her time and talents to everyone in need.

I'd like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking Cheryl for her generosity and compassion to help and support others in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

SCHOOL SUPP. WORKERS: STRIKE - SOLIDARITY

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand in solidarity with school support workers at the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education and the South Shore Regional Centre for Education.

The NSGEU members in Local 70 and 73 are on strike. These school support workers play a vital role in keeping students engaged in learning. These workers are asking for a modest wage increase that will help bring the lowest-paid worker closer to a living wage, and they are being asked to be treated like other support workers in the province.

People doing the same work should be paid the same amount today no matter where they live or work. Students deserve the best support possible around this province, and support workers should be paid a consistent wage in every regional centre. We are one province, and every child, no matter where they live, is entitled to the help they need to achieve in school. No one should be denied because of staff shortages due to low and inconsistent wages.

New Democrats thank school support workers for the commitment and dedication to our students, and I ask all members of this House to join us in standing in solidarity with their cause to be treated fairly and equitably.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

ORGANIZERS & VOLUNS.: AYLESFORD CAR SHOW - CONGRATS.

CHRIS PALMER: Mr. Speaker, more than 160 entries were registered for the second annual Aylesford Car Show on September 10th, as our little village hosted many participants and guests from all throughout the region.

It was great to see the support given to the St. Mary's Home and School Association and other local groups, who had a chance to raise some needed funds throughout the afternoon. I want to thank all who organized the day and all the volunteers who made it a success. I would also like to give special acknowledgement to Ricky Balsor and his village commission for being the driving force behind the event.

Please join me in congratulating the village of Aylesford for hosting another great community event in the constituency of Kings West. It was another great example of the community spirit of Aylesford, whose motto is "A Community with Pride." I truly am proud of the village my family calls home.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

MACDONALD, MANNING: 80TH BIRTHDAY - BEST WISHES

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to wish a happy 80th birthday to someone who would be very familiar to many people in this House: Manning MacDonald, the former MLA for Sydney-Cape Breton South, I think he started in.

He served a 20-year career here in the Legislature, and also served 15 years as mayor of the former city of Sydney before his time as MLA, so Manning probably has had one of the most successful careers in the recent history of Nova Scotia. Manning did a lot for the community in Sydney, if you look at the construction of Centre 200 and the construction of the boardwalk. Much of his work is still talked about and celebrated to this day.

As the MLA and the guy who in his teenage years joined his executive way back when, I rise in my place to wish Manning MacDonald a happy 80th birthday and thank him for all the support that he provided, not only to the community, but to a kid starting out in politics. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Indeed, we wish our former colleague a very happy birthday as well.

The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SCHOOL SUPP. WORKERS: WAGE HIKE NEED - RECOG.

SUZY HANSEN: Right now, some school support workers in the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education would make more money working in fast food than they are supporting children within our public school system. These workers are simply asking for reasonable wage increases that would see the lowest-paid workers be brought up to close to a living wage.

There are also discrepancies in their pay, depending on where in the province they're working. People should be paid the same wage for doing the same work, no matter where they live. We need to support our school support workers so they can help strengthen and improve our public education system.

I would like to urge all members of this House - I urge you to return to the bargaining table and present these workers with a fair offer of improved wages that will ensure that they want to continue to work in this sector.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

PORTERS LAKE AND SHORE REC. CTR.: INCLUSIVE CAMPS - THANKS

KENT SMITH: I rise today to bring recognition to the Lake and Shore Community Recreation Centre in Porters Lake. The centre has been providing a safe and fun environment for children and youth in Summer camps for 11 years, and is committed to providing inclusive camps that respect the needs of all children.

These inclusive camps would not be possible without the commitment and energy of the young men and women from the community who spend their Summer working with children from diverse communities.

I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in thanking youth leaders Starr Newcombe, Shae Lynn Penney, Jackson Murphy, and Karly Turner for their commitment to recreation, inclusion, and community building on the Eastern Shore. I would also like to wish them all the best as they advance to their post-secondary education and beyond.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton-Park West on an introduction.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I beg leave to make the introduction. We have three amazing young men in the House with us. I'll be calling their names and I ask them to stand up. They were the best canvassing lead. I had four. Unfortunately, one of them couldn't make it today because he's writing his mid-term exam, but I will be starting with Dylan Bennett. Dylan is doing his Master of Arts and Political Science, and he's writing his thesis on municipal Indigenous relationships. That's one.

The second one is Michael DiQuinzio. Michael is doing his second year of Commerce at Dalhousie. They're both helping me in my office. One is helping me with social media and the other one with my initiatives.

The last person we have is Nicholas Habib. Nicholas has an amazing character. I'll be reading my member's statement on all of them, and you'll get to know them better. I ask the House to welcome those amazing young men. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Indeed, we welcome all visitors to the legislature and hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

CAMPAIGN WORKERS: HARD WORK - RECOG.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I rise today to recognize four young men who helped me with my election campaign in 2021: Dylan Bennett, Michele DiQuinzio, Matthew Samaan, and Nicholas Habib. They knocked on doors with me, pounded signs, and talked to an overwhelming number of residents in Clayton Park West. They truly made canvassing fun for so many youths.

They attracted and trained the most multicultural canvassing team in Nova Scotia. I believe the team had canvassers who spoke 10 different languages. Their hard work and dedication are commendable, and it's thrilling to see young people like them excited and involved in politics.

I truly believe that engaging young people, especially newcomers, is good for democracy in Nova Scotia. I would ask the House to join me in recognizing these outstanding young men for their incredible work ethic. And very handsome men too.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

DAL. UNIV. CUPE STRIKE: LOW WAGES - RECOG.

GARY BURRILL: Today will conclude a full week of the CUPE strike at Dalhousie, where the members of Local 3912 are taking a stand for living wages: Dalhousie's 1,500 teaching assistants, markers, demonstrators, and part-time teachers.

The strike is about wage fairness, as well it might be. Teaching assistants at Dal are paid \$24.47 an hour. By comparison, TAs at Concordia in Montreal make \$29 an hour, TAs at the University of Toronto make \$44 an hour; at Western in London, teaching assistants are paid \$48.12. Halifax is every bit as expensive to live in as any of these cities.

If academic workers in Nova Scotia are not simply to be exploited by the employer, they need to receive - in the words of the strike slogan - Living Wages for Living Here.

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

ACADIAN MAPLE: GLYNNEVAN MAPLE WHISKY LAUNCH - RECOG.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite my fellow MLAs and Nova Scotians to help celebrate Acadian Maple's new Glynnevan Maple Whisky. This partnership with Guysborough's Glynnevan Whisky Company is an exciting new endeavour for both local companies.

The launch took place this past Saturday afternoon at their retail shop and café in Upper Tantallon. They were offering tastings, maple syrup taffy on snow, and live music from StoneHouse.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish Acadian Maple all the success on the launch of their new whisky.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

FARES, WADIH: LEB. COM. LEADER - RECOG.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: On Sunday, October 23rd, the Canadian Lebanon Society of Halifax planted a cedar tree in commemoration of honorary consul Mr. Wadih Fares and his 25th anniversary in the position. The ceremony held at Sir Sandford Fleming Park was just the most recent celebration recognizing the accomplishments of Mr. Fares.

The Order of Canada recipient earlier this month was also awarded the Queen's Platinum Jubilee award. In June, he was awarded the highest honour possible for a civilian by the Lebanese government, the Order of Merit. Mr. Fares is a leader in his community. He's a leader in Halifax and a leader in our province.

I ask this House to join me in honouring and celebrating him in this House.

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

GOMEZ, STACY: TENANTS' RIGHTS WORK - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, renters have a choice when faced with an eviction: stay and fight through a slow and official but uncertain process or look immediately for safe shelter. Without legal help or extended policy knowledge, these situations can be extremely difficult and intimidating to resolve.

Stacy Gomez is a constituent of mine who recently fought against being renocted from her Halifax apartment and won. Despite representing herself against a prominent property owner and facing personal threats, Stacy's resolve, research, will, and advocacy won her residential tenancies case. She was in the midst of fight number two and headed to small claims court to get the settlement from her landlord. Yesterday, she received notice that her home will be condemned due to neglect by her landlord.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow members to join me in recognizing Stacy's hard work in Nova Scotia tenants' rights, for her strong resolve in getting a favourable result for her hearing, and for continuing her fight to see that this case sets a precedent for all Nova Scotian renters.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

QUEENS CO. OLYMP. WALL: UNVEILING - RECOG.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, on August 24th, people gathered at Queens Place Emera Centre in Liverpool for the unveiling of the Queens County's Olympic Wall.

This wall serves as a tribute of honour to the past, present and future Queens County constituents who have participated as athletes, coaches, and officials at the world Olympic Games and Special Olympics World Games. The seven initial honourees were in attendance. They are Owen Hamlin, Jamie Belong, Betty Ann Daury, Alexander Shankel, Jenna Martin-Evans, Ben Theriau, and Sarah Mitton.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to please join me in applauding the team that took the initiative to make this idea a reality and in congratulating those honoured by the impressive Queens County's Olympic Wall.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

SOUTHWELL, RUSTUM: BUS. AWD. RECIP. - RECOG.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, each year Junior Achievement of Nova Scotia and the Business Hall of Fame honour those Nova Scotians who inspire the business community and future business leaders with a record of unparalleled lifetime achievement: laureates who exemplify growth, courage, success, and leadership.

Candidates are nominated by community members and must demonstrate that they have been recognized by the profession or business as having made an outstanding contribution to the success of a business or profession demonstrated during their business career, entrepreneurial spirit, and a record of outstanding entrepreneurial achievements, and demonstrated effective leadership and be considered a role model for future entrepreneurs, business leaders, and others in business.

I'm delighted that Bedford resident Rustum Southwell is one of this year's honourees. Mr. Southwell was one of the first Black franchisees in Canada. He founded the longest-serving Black business development organization in our country, the Black Business Initiative, and he has served as BBI's first CEO for 17 years. I'm delighted for Rustum that he will be honoured in this way at a dinner on November 3rd.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

TRIBAL BOXING CLUB BOXERS: ESKER CUP PERF. - CONGRATS.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, in mid-October, coach Bridget Stevens and three tribal boxing club boxers travelled from Mi'kma'ki to Ireland for the Esker All-Female Box Cup, one of the largest competitions for female boxers in the world.

Boxers Holly McDonald, Natteal Battiste, and Vanity Thompson represented the North End Dartmouth club, competing alongside over 300 boxers from 14 different countries. This was the first Esker All Female Box Cup after a two-year hiatus. Excitingly, Vanity Thompson, a VON licensed practical nurse by day, brought home the Best Novice Fighter of the Year award to Dartmouth North.

I am in awe of the dedication, tenacity, and athleticism these boxers have demonstrated. I ask the House to join me in extending congratulations to Holly, Natteal, and Vanity, and coach Bridget on representing Dartmouth so well on an international stage, and to Vanity for being recognized as one of the best in the world. They all continue to do Dartmouth North and Nova Scotia proud.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

[11:30 a.m.]

CHRISTIE, SHEILA: AMHERST TOWN COUNC. SERV. - THANKS

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to thank Sheila Christie in her service to the people of the Town of Amherst, through the Amherst town council. Sheila has resigned her position with the Town of Amherst effective October 31st. She has served six years on town council and five as deputy mayor. Her leadership and experience led to the organization of the town's first poverty reduction committee. As well, she was part of the 'A' Fresh Start Community Initiative, which provides funding for organizations that bring creative new events or initiatives to the community, or enhance current programs.

Sheila was part of many boards and committees, volunteering her time and energy into bettering our community. Sheila and I have worked together on important issues, often behind the scenes. We both see that much change is needed in the area of domestic abuse and in all levels of politics, including removing abusive and harassment in-person and online bullying with women in politics.

Please join me today in thanking Sheila for her service to the Town of Amherst. We wish her best in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

TEAM N.S. BOYS HOCKEY TEAM: CH'SHIP PERF. - CONGRATS.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize Team Nova Scotia Under-15 boys' hockey team on their first-place finish in the Atlantic Challenge Cup, no easy task. Congratulations to: Cole Bent, Max Brocklehurst, Aaron Chipp, Will Cole, Brody Dawson, Schafer Gibbs, Max Halladay, Jacob Hartlin, Joshua Henry, Ian Lovett, Ryder MacQueen, Aiden O'Donnell, Owen O'Donnell, Dawson Peverelle, Jordan Rittenberg, Will Shearer, Jesse Sinclair, Gavin Sudds, Dawson Swift, Logan Trewin, and Daniel Walters. We are all so very proud of you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

STANTON, MARLENE "MOO": DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the incredible life of Dartmouth South resident Marlene "Moo" Stanton, who passed away recently after a brief illness. Marlene arrived in Canada from England by ship, chased by a German U-boat. Her life in Canada was remarkable. She was a soloist with the Ottawa Ballet Company, a model, a folk and tap dancer, a rug hooker, a traveller, a jazz fan. She was a journalist, as a writer,

investigative reporter, documentary writer, and producer and assignment editor with the CBC in P.E.I. She also published her first novel in 2019.

Marlene was committed to democratic socialism and the NDP, and volunteered her time on many campaigns, including two of mine. She lived all over Canada, but we were lucky that she ended up here in Dartmouth, where as recently as this Summer she could regularly be found folk dancing on the waterfront.

Marlene's thoughtful wit will be deeply missed by her family and friends, including those of the Dartmouth South EDA, where she was a treasured volunteer. Please join me in marking the life of Marlene Stanton.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

REIMER, DEBBIE: KIDS ACTION PGM. SERV. - RECOG.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to Debbie Reimer of Canning for 28 years of service and dedication to the Kids Action Program of Kings County. Debbie has held numerous positions of leadership in her community, such as executive director of the Kids Action Program, executive director of Apple Tree Landing Family Education Centre, and executive member of the Nova Scotia Association of Social Work.

Debbie has been a teacher and educator of many aspects of family life, including parenting, family literacy, and positive relationship building. She has been an advocate and spokesperson for many who often have no voice of their own, and she has been a proponent for social justice in her community for the most vulnerable.

Please join me today to recognize Debbie Reimer for her dedication and service to the Kids Action Program of Kings County.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

SIMMONDS, A.J.: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: I rise today to recognize the great work of executive director A.J. Simmonds and his team at the Mulgrave Park Caring and Learning Centre. This work is strengthened by the fabric of our communities and it's no easy task. It requires leadership, innovation, and courage and trust, just as our young entrepreneurs do on many occasions, and they are our future leaders.

I'd just like to recognize that this past September, the centre organized a day for kids to prepare them and support them to go back to school. It was through the friendships and relationships that A.J. has built that he was able to offer free haircuts, free clothing,

and a day of snacks, all provided by @thebarbermarvin, and Goethers Boutique & Co, Tiara, and snacks provided by @chefpup902, and also more clothing by tREv Clothing.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize A.J., Tiara, Trevor, Demetrius, and Marvin. It is because of you and your kindness and dedication to community - we will all be better for it. Thank you so much. Big shoutout to my son, A.J. Simmonds, from Mom. Love you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

C.B. CTR.-WHIT. PIER MLA: BIRTHDAY - BEST WISHES

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish a dear friend and colleague, the member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier, a happy and blessed birthday. Hopefully I don't say her name over and over again.

The member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier is an amazing MLA who cares for her constituency of Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier. She is a strong advocate for the labour movement and is no stranger to a bullhorn. The member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier's passion is seen here in this House on numerous occasions and has been a force to be reckoned with.

I will say this member is a mom of two beautiful, strong girls, as we saw earlier - Rory and Isla. They are so blessed to have her as their mom, which is why I'd like all members of this House to join me in wishing my dear friend, the member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier, the MLA, the happiest of birthdays. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

WARD, JIMMY: MUN. PHYS. ACTIVITY LEADER - CONGRATS.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge former YMCA fitness supervisor Jimmy Ward on his new position as Municipal Physical Activity Leader in Oxford.

Jimmy notes that there are folks doing interesting activities in town, including hula hoop lessons, Zumba classes, and more. With the coming Winter season, there are many new plans for the renovated Oxford Lions Arena, including hockey, skating, ringette, and curling. Jimmy is also interested in enhancing awareness of and access to our local trails system, which could include signage, maps, group activities, and more.

Jimmy is reaching out to the community members now, looking for new ideas and volunteers who he can help out with their activity needs and put them into action. Ward plans to survey the community members as well to gauge their wants and needs.

I ask you to join me in congratulating Jimmy Ward on his new position and wish him success as he works with the community to enhance the level of fitness programs in Oxford.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

PUBLICOVER, ERIC & SANDRA: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I've previously spoken in this House about the tremendous work of the Wolfville Farmers' Market to showcase homegrown products from our province, as well as incubate new vendors. Part of their success lies in having established vendors who understand the challenges of bringing local food to our tables, and who pass on this knowledge.

Today I want to recognize two of those vendors, who have recently announced their retirement from the Wolfville Farmers' Market: Eric and Sandra Publicover from the Fish Store in Gold River. These vendors have been steady and reliable vendors at the market, requiring painfully early Saturday morning departures from their home to serve their customers in Wolfville.

It will be quite an adjustment to shop at the market without seeing them. I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in extending a heartfelt thank you to Eric and Sandra Publicover for their contribution to making the Wolfville Farmers' Market the success that it is and for their contribution to our province's important food-production sector.

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

DYSLEXIA AWARE. MO.: CELEBRATING PROGRESS - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, one in five Canadians live with dyslexia, and more still live with some kind of language-based learning disability. Dyslexia is a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to challenges matching sounds with letters and words, or decoding.

Each October is Dyslexia Awareness Month in Canada, and Dyslexia Canada's Mark It Read campaign is celebrated across the country by lighting monuments and buildings in red. The 2022 campaign marks five years of Mark It Read, and this year's theme is Celebrating Progress, encouraging people to use the hashtags #SayDyslexia and #PoweredByDyslexia.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my fellow members join me in recognizing Dyslexia Awareness Month and the Mark It Read campaign, and commit to considering and

including Nova Scotians with dyslexia and other learning disabilities in their work and communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

GABARUS RESIDENTS: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.

HON. BRIAN COMER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to shine some light on the community members of Gabarus and the members of their fire hall.

The people in this little fishing village are known for their kindness and hospitality, which was even more evident during Hurricane Fiona. The community stepped into action immediately following the storm to open their fire hall as a comfort center. Their thoughtfulness and compassion for those who suffered so much loss and devastation was heartwarming and won't be forgotten.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to commend these community members and the volunteers for coming together to help those in need.

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

MORASH, SHIRLEY: COM. SERV. - THANKS

LORELEI NICOLL: I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate Cole Harbour-Dartmouth resident Shirley Morash.

Shirley is of the generation of dedicated service and has spent her whole life volunteering. She has acted in various roles with the Dartmouth Curling Club, the Nova Scotia Ladies Curling Association, the Canadian Curling Association, and the Labatt Brier Committee. She's been inducted into the Executive Honour Roll with the Canadian Curling Association, was a World Curling Freytag Award recipient, and was inducted into the World Curling Federation Hall of Fame.

Shirley served as the president and gift shop buyer for the Dartmouth General Hospital Auxiliary and served on the Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation board. She still remains active by being a great resource and support to several of her organizations that she has been affiliated with in the past. Shirley celebrates her 90th birthday this year and shows no signs of slowing down.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking and congratulating Shirley Morash.

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

HURR. CLEANUP DELAY: IMPACT - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today with regret. Earlier this month we were told that help was coming to the residents post-Fiona. We were told that trees would be removed from private properties, especially if they were on homes.

There are residents who have gone 27 days without power, including seniors, due to these large trees. We have residents who have had trees on their homes causing damage day by day. Sadly, it was not government that answered the call but the kindness of strangers, community, and small businesses. Residents were told that the government would be providing human resources. Unfortunately, they have been left waiting.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

LOWE, MARK: LOBSTER MADE EASY - CONGRATS.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Mahone Bay entrepreneur Mark Lowe and his company Lobster Made Easy.

Mark has developed a way to package a whole, pre-cooked frozen lobster so it can be prepared at home in the microwave and ready to eat in under six minutes - no mess, no smell, no stress.

Mark took his product to the popular CBC television show *Dragons' Den* and Dragon Arlene Dickinson, a venture capitalist in the food and health space, was sufficiently impressed to offer an investment of \$350,000 for a 32 per cent share of the company. You will soon be able to find Lobster Made Easy at a Sobeys store near you.

I wish to extend my most sincere congratulations to Mark Lowe and wish him all the best with this very clever and delicious endeavour.

THE SPEAKER: You've got me hungry already.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

INTO THE MYSTIC: UNIQUE PRODUCTS - RECOG.

HON. TONY INCE: I'd like to introduce you to a unique business in Cole Harbour - Into the Mystic on Cole Harbour Road. It is a friendly, neat little store.

They have a variety of items, from fantasy decor to jewellery, salt lamps, essential oils, and incense, to more mystical things like crystals and tarot decks. The staff are friendly and knowledgeable, and they often offer services such as tarot card readings, crystal ball

scribing, numerology, and tea leaf reading. Let's be honest, Mr. Speaker, what politician wouldn't want to know what the future holds?

I invite everyone to come to Cole Harbour to check out this little shop in person.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

LILLEY OSENDE, JULIA: PADDLING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, it is hard to keep up with Dartmouth North paddler Julia Lilley Osende, both literally and figuratively.

This world-class Crichton Park paddler has represented the Mic Mac Amateur Aquatic Club around the world - in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, to name a few. This Summer alone, Julia racked up three golds and one silver medal at the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games, both solo and with her teammates. At the Canoe Sprint World Championships in Dartmouth, Julia and her team won gold in the C4 500. To top it all off, Julia brought home two medals - a bronze and a gold - from the 2022 Under 23 World Championships in Hungary.

It all started for Julia when she joined Mic Mac AAC in 2009, the same year that the then 8-year-old witnessed her first Worlds in Dartmouth. I ask the House to join me in celebrating how much Julia has achieved since then and cheer her on for what I know will be a very bright future in paddling.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

WILLIAMS, MATT: BOUNDARY BARBERSHOP OPENING - CONGRATS.

ELIZABETH SMTH-MCCROSSIN: Today I rise to congratulate Matt Williams, who opened the Boundary Barbershop on July 13th this Summer.

Matt was working in Moncton with his partner Raven when they decided to move closer to home, as they were expecting their child. Matt decided to open up his shop in Amherst due to the high cost of fuel for travelling. I'm so happy that Matt chose Amherst to open, and I wish him the best as he continues to invest in the Amherst business community as well as his clients.

Today, join me in congratulating Matt on his new business and wish him the best as he grows his venture. I wish Matt all the luck.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke.

[11:45 a.m.]

SMALL BUS. MO.: CELEB. ENTREPRENEURS - RECOG.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I rise today to acknowledge that October is Small Business Month, which celebrates the important contributions that entrepreneurs make in the Sackville-Uniacke community.

Small Business Month in Canada began 16 years ago in October of 2006, with the intention of empowering entrepreneurs to come together with other small business owners to offer knowledge and support for a better Canada. This month is also dedicated to celebrating the efforts of many individuals who have chosen to pursue entrepreneurship, as well as those who assist in supporting small business. In addition, entrepreneurs have the opportunity to discover programs and organizations that offer support for small businesses.

I'd like to take an opportunity to thank everyone who works with and supports small business in Sackville-Uniacke for their hard work and their dedication to our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

THORNTON, AMBER: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I rise today to recognize Amber Thornton, an amazing young lady in my community.

Amber has participated in the Girl Guides of Canada from the age of five to 18. Amber began attending Mount Saint Vincent University in 2022, where she studies early childhood education. Amber now leads a Sparks and Brownies unit in Clayton Park West. She provides the girls with structure, kindness, respect, but most of all, a lot of fun.

When not studying or volunteering with the Girl Guides unit, you can find her volunteering with the Rockingham youth group. Amber is a great role model for the young girls of our community. I ask the House to join me in recognizing Amber for all her volunteerism activity.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise to recognize Club 24 in downtown Dartmouth. Club 24 is a home away from home for many seeking support for addictions and substance use disorder.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I believe that might be your third statement. I'm sorry. The honourable member for Dartmouth South, I apologize.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise to recognize Club 24 in downtown Dartmouth. It is my third. You're right, sorry. (Laughter)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MCDORMAND, FINN: WRESTLING GOLD MEDAL WIN - CONGRATS.

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: I rise to recognize and congratulate Finn McDormand of Lower Branch, who won gold at the School Sport Nova Scotia Wrestling Provincials, 54 kg category, held at King's-Edgehill School in Windsor last March.

Finn has been competing for Park View Education Centre and the Predators amateur wrestling club since 2018. Finn's coach, Amanda Silver, says that Finn is determined, hard-working, and amazing under pressure.

Finn also had the honour of representing Nova Scotia in the 2022 Canada Summer Games in the Niagara Region last August. They fought hard in their first two matches, coming away with one win and one loss, while contending with a nasty collarbone sprain, which ended the competition for Finn. Finn also competes in Judo and is hoping to represent Nova Scotia at the upcoming Winter Canada Games in P.E.I.

I would ask the members of the House of Assembly to please join me in recognizing Finn McDormand's athletic achievements. Way to go, Finn.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

BEDARD, NOAH: BEDARD BAKERY OPENING - CONGRATS.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: I rise today to pay special recognition to Noah Bedard. Not all members of the constituency are born and raised here. Some move from away to make our community their home.

After Noah and his spouse Thea visited our province in June of 2020, Windsor clearly left a good impression on them, because in the Winter of 2021, they decided to leave Toronto, Canada's busiest city, and move here when he took the position as kitchen manager at Schoolhouse Brewery.

As if he wasn't busy enough putting his French culinary training to good use in the kitchen at Schoolhouse, Noah, Thea, and his business partner Kelly Bingham opened Bedard Bakery on Gerrish Street. I think you can tell by the early morning lineups that their bread and pastries are a hit and make your tastebuds want to dance.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in officially welcoming Noah Bedard and his wife Thea to our beautiful province and congratulate them on the opening one of the most amazing bakeries you will find.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

COM. CARES YOUTH OUTREACH: HURR. SUPP. - THANKS

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise again to congratulate and thank a community organization that was there for everyone during the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona.

Community Cares Youth Outreach, led by Dorothy Halliday, put together a team of volunteers, making sure that families and children were getting the nutrition that they needed during this terrible disaster.

Community Cares Youth Outreach continually goes above and beyond in our community. I would like to commend them for their work during Hurricane Fiona, but more importantly, throughout the year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

TOMLIK, P./MACLEOD, C.: LIONS CLUB AWD. RECIPS. - CONGRATS.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate Antigonish residents Paul Tomlik and Chalmers MacLeod on receiving a long service award from the Lions Club. Paul received a chevron for 45 years of service and Chalmers received a chevron for 30 years of service.

The mission of the Lions Club is to empower volunteers and partners to improve health and well-being, strengthen communities, and support those in need through humanitarian services and grants that impact lives globally, and encourage peace and international understanding.

The Lions Club is very active in our community, volunteering at many events: St. James United Church luncheons, St. Martha's Regional Hospital Foundation Help Day, Canadian Blood Services blood donor clinics to name a few. They host community breakfasts, public speaking contests, and award student bursaries.

Paul and Chalmers have been seen helping at all of these events. They are quick to help out and I know there are always smiles and laughs when Paul and Chalmers are around. I ask all members to congratulate these outstanding men and volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the betterment of our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

DOUCET-BOUDREAU, GLENDA: CERT. RECIP. - CONGRATS.

RONNIE LEBLANC: Monsieur le président, je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour féliciter Glenda Doucet-Boudreau, le récipiendaire du certificat de mérite Léger-Comeau 2022 en reconnaissance de ses années de travail dans les domaines de l'éducation en langue française et des questions relatives aux femmes.

Alors qu'elle siégeait au conseil d'administration de la Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Glenda a fait partie d'un groupe de parents qui ont intenté une action en justice contre la province pour le retard de l'adoption d'écoles françaises homogènes dans nos communautés. La Cour suprême a tranché en faveur des parents et l'affaire, connue sous le nom *Doucette-Boudreau c. Nouvelle-Écosse*, continue d'être un précédent important en ce qui concerne les droits à l'éducation dans les langues de la minorité.

Glenda est également membre fondatrice de l'Association Madeleine LeBlanc, un groupe dont la mission est l'avancement des femmes et qui a récemment compilé les histoires de 250 femmes inspirantes de Clare.

Je demande à tous les membres de se joindre à moi pour féliciter Glenda Doucette-Boudreau, une femme inspirante pour avoir reçu ce prix.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Glenda Doucet-Boudreau, the recipient of the 2022 Léger-Comeau Certificate of Merit in recognition of her years of work in the areas of French language education and women's issues.

While on the board of the Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Glenda was one of the group of parents who brought the province to court over the delay in the adoption of homogeneous French schools in our community. The Supreme Court's decision in favour of the parents in the case known as *Doucet-Boudreau v. Nova Scotia* continues to be the important precedent regarding minority languages' educational rights.

Glenda was also the founding member of the Association Madeleine LeBlanc, a group whose mission is the advancement of women, that has recently compiled stories of 250 inspirational women of Clare. I asked that all members join me in congratulating Glenda Doucet-Boudreau, an inspirational woman, on receiving this award. Merci.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

BEACON HOUSE: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. STEVE CRAIG: I rise today to thank the volunteers and staff at Beacon House in Lower Sackville. My late mother, Josephine Craig, was one of the original

founding members of Beacon House, which began operations in 1985. Her legacy lives on to this day and I am so very proud of her for that.

Beacon House is an integral part of the community and assists hundreds of families with food, clothing, shelter, and other essential programs. This year's Back to School Program provided over 200 backpacks full of school supplies for students whose families may not have otherwise been able to afford them.

Additionally, within the last year, they have assisted those who are homeless, most recently with the Fiona emergency shelter, through their Sackville Area Warming Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in thanking the volunteers and staff at Beacon House for continuing to care and support their community members.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

PRISKE, JENN: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jenn Priske of Timberlea, a business leader and community champion. Jenn led the parent-teacher coalition at BLT Junior Elementary School in Timberlea to secure a new fully inclusive playground - one of the first in the HRM that incorporated more diverse play elements than traditional programs. This project further enhanced the efforts of, at the time, the provincial Liberal government to establish more inclusive playgrounds so that children with different abilities would be able to enjoy the same fun opportunities outdoors and improve their health and well-being.

Jenn was also appointed to the Economic Growth Council and has been a strong advocate for women in trades. Her work to educate and encourage young girls and women to consider training in hands-on skilled trades has opened new doors and possibilities for women.

I would like the members of the House of Assembly to thank Jenn for her efforts in advocating for more inclusive space in communities, and for also being a strong role model and mentor for young women in this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

BANNISTER, ANGELA & JEFF: AED DONATIONS - THANKS

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on November 1, 2022, it will have been three years since Angela and Jeff Bannister unexpectedly lost their son, and Kevin lost his

big brother, Braeden, at the age of 15, due to cardiac arrest. Braeden was a kind-hearted young man who lit up any room as soon as he walked in.

I was able to get to know Braeden, as he was a junior member of my fire department in Lantz - always there with a smile no matter what the task was.

The Bannisters decided they did not want this to happen to any other family, so they rallied for help from the community. They helped East Hants schools become equipped with AED machines. Having access to AED machines means all the difference within a matter of seconds.

They also just finished their 3rd Braeden Bannister Memorial Ball Tournament on October 7th to 9th, raising \$37,000 to help high school grants help families on costs for sports and communities, just to name a few. As Braeden would say, “Always be humble and kind.”

I would like all the members to extend our congratulations to the Bannisters and the numerous volunteers who make these events so successful.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

SALV. ARMY: HURR. SUPP. - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place to recognize the Salvation Army in Sydney and the Greater Cape Breton area. They really stepped up again, as they always do, during Hurricane Fiona, delivering food to thousands and thousands of residents around the CBRM, providing clothing and other necessities that families need. They do it time and time again, not just during our most difficult times as we have seen with Hurricane Fiona or some of the other events in Sydney but every day. Our office is in touch with them. We're in constant communication with them. They have never said no when somebody was in need.

I rise in my place today to recognize Nicole and everybody with the Salvation Army for the incredible work that they do, and for the compassion and support they provide to the greater CBRM community.

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

LATOROVSKI, LASZLO: SPORTS HALL OF FAME IND. - CONGRATS.

HON. BRIAN WONG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a 2022 inductee into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame.

One of Cheema's long-time coaches, Laszlo Latorovszki, lovingly known as Csom, who lives in Waverley, has coached many Canadian Olympians, and has been a four-time Team Canada Olympic coach.

In 1990, Csom arrived from Hungary and, as head coach, took on the task of continuing Cheema's tradition of high performance. Cheema went on to win the National Championships in 1992, 1993, and 1994.

Today, his legacy lives on through the new Cheema Fitness Centre, named after him and one of his proteges, and Cheema's current head coach, Mike Kerrivan.

Mr. Speaker, please help me congratulate the wonderful accomplishments of Csom for our community, our province, and our nation.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

YAR. FIREFIGHTERS: AWD. RECIPS. - THANKS

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the Yarmouth fire department recently held its annual banquet and awards night. Firefighters Darren King, Kevin Taylor, Peter Winship, and Dave Winship were all awarded both 20-year pins and fire exemplary service medals. I would like to ask this House to join me in thanking Darren King, Kevin Taylor, Peter Winship, and Dave Winship for 20 years of exemplary service and in thanking them for their bravery and dedication to the safety of our community.

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

[12:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: FAIR HIRING PRACTICES - EXPLAIN

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia Government's fair hiring practices state a fair hiring process is "an accessible, consistent and transparent process that is impartial based on principles of merit and equity." It goes on to say that it includes "consistent recruitment and selection processes and consistent treatment of applicants and candidates throughout the processes; screening and selection criteria that are related to job requirements; consistent screening, selection criteria and evaluation of candidates for similar positions." I'll table that policy.

Does the Premier believe that his government is following the province's fair hiring practices?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Absolutely.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I have to remind the House that the Premier has fired successful public servant leaders, including the CEO of the Nova Scotia Health Authority, Dr. Brendan Carr; Laurel Broten, CEO of NSBI; Malcolm Fraser, CEO of Innovacorp; and Jennifer Angel, CEO of Develop Nova Scotia. He replaced them with partisan - and in one case, according to him - two of his personal friends, whom he decided to pay \$1,500 a day.

I must ask the Premier: Does he believe this followed the fair hiring processes outlined in the fair hiring policy?

THE PREMIER: I'll remind the member that when he was minister, he fired school boards. When he was minister, he fired regional health authority boards. The reality is that when you're elected to form a government, you make a commitment to Nova Scotians that you will get things done. I will assure Nova Scotians we are getting things done on their behalf, and we will continue to do so.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Of course, I do have to mention that was after three independent reports suggesting that we do that for students, and as well, there was a platform that ran on that.

However, we have learned recently that the two individuals the Premier hired - this is based on a FOIPOP - to replace all these award-winning CEOs, they didn't even have their resumé. I'll quote from an email that we've attained through FOIPOP: "We do not have the CV or resumé for either of them. I believe they asked about the bios Deputy Langley referenced during the tech briefing. We could send them those." The email proceeds to send the bios.

The fact is that the Premier hired his personal friends without even having the resumé of those individuals. How is that a fair hiring process?

THE PREMIER: Interim CEOs, for starters. There's a process for the long-term ones. What I'll tell Nova Scotians is that there's a lot of work to be done in this province. What we need is people who will step up and represent and get things done on behalf of Nova Scotians. Those are the people we want to work with - high-quality individuals with extensive . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Premier has the floor.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: I know that the Opposition parties have made it their mission to smear the personal reputations of highly respected individuals. I will assure that all the individuals we've put in place to help us transition through are capable, quality individuals who care about this province, just like the people on this side of the House.

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

PREM.: RENT CONTROL - IMPLEMENT

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. A recent survey from the website www.rentals.ca shows that Nova Scotia has had the highest increase in the country in rental costs in the past year, up 35.5 per cent across all property types, an average of \$2,453. That's more expensive than the average rent in Ontario. I'll table that.

By refusing to implement comprehensive rent control and enforcement, and build non-market housing, the Premier is presiding over an explosion in rental costs. Can he see that the only people who are benefiting are the ones collecting the cheques?

THE PREMIER: We know the reality of the housing crisis that we have in this province. It's on the list of things that prior governments at all levels looked away from. We're not looking away. We are getting busy making sure that housing stock is being built, and that there are real, sustainable, long-term solutions to the housing crisis. It's a very distressing situation we have right now with the rents, for sure.

We know that people are under pressure. We know that people are looking for long-term housing options. We know the stress it's causing on families. That's why we're getting to work to make sure that we get through this and have long-term solutions. That's what we'll continue to do.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, it's getting worse and worse. Chelsea from Grand Lake recently wrote us to say:

I am in my mid-20s and I am completely priced out of even dreaming of affording my own place. So thankful to my folks who are letting me stay with them but it's difficult, knowing that even though I work hard and save, I could never afford the combination of rent and groceries, forget anything about that. As a young person who even with so much privilege is feeling the squeeze, it's enough to make me wonder if I should think of leaving Nova Scotia - something I've never even considered before in 24 years of living here.

Can the Premier see that greasing the wheels for developers to build unaffordable housing, or “housing stock,” as the Premier calls it, isn’t helping Chelsea or the many people in her situation?

THE PREMIER: I know a number of young people who have similar concerns and sentiments, for sure. We need to focus on real solutions. That means building housing. The member might not like that, but that’s what the answer to the housing crisis is. The answer to the housing crisis is more housing. That’s why we’re taking the steps we’re taking. That’s why we’re putting initiatives through.

I know that some in the HRM council don’t like it, and the Opposition don’t like it, but I’ll tell you who will like it - Nova Scotians, when we build enough housing to fix the crisis.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: The answer is building housing that people can afford, which this government seems hell-bent on not doing.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to share another story. Terri Smith-Fraser is a full time CCA who has worked in the health care sector for 30 years. She was recently renovicted from her apartment in Halifax and is now living in a van. Since then, she has noticed how many other people are sleeping in their vehicles. She said that with the housing crisis she’s not sure what else people are supposed to do. Not only are the rents higher but you need to make triple the income. I’ll table that.

Last week the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services said that this government is continually looking at balancing the rights of landlords and tenants.

Can the Premier see that the balance this government is looking at by failing to act is leaving Nova Scotians behind?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, in fact, balance is what is required to govern. We put a rental cap system in place. We’ll look at other alternatives - rental supplements. We want to help Nova Scotians.

I would say to the member and to that Nova Scotian, we know that Nova Scotians are struggling. We know that CCAs in particular are struggling - ECEs, EAs. We know all these things. That’s why we took the steps we did to right the historical wrongs that have happened to CCAs over the years. That’s why we will continue to try to make sure we support those Nova Scotians in terms of the wages of CCAs and others.

There are real issues with the housing crisis, for sure. We need to build more housing stock to solve the housing crisis in this province. That’s why we’re focused on that.

I encourage the HRM Council and I encourage the member opposite to get behind this government on getting that done.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

MAH: CONSOL. OF POWER - EXPLAIN

HON. KELLY REGAN: We're seeing a Premier who wants to consolidate power around himself, his office and his pals. We saw it when he announced that he wants to veto any bylaw within the Halifax Regional Municipality, we saw it when he got rid of Tourism Nova Scotia, we saw it when he got rid of Dr. Brendan Carr and the Health Authority Board and replaced them with a Tory lawyer. We saw it when he replaced the CEOs and boards of NSBI, Innovacorp, and Develop Nova Scotia with two personal friends. Now we are seeing it on the boards of housing, the Art Gallery, as well as other boards.

Why does the Premier believe he and his partisan friends know more than long-serving experts in our province?

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I want to try to answer at least part of what that preamble was. That is, we are very concerned about the housing crisis and we've indicated that we will act on it.

We know there are issues before the city. I respect the city council and the mayor but nevertheless, we are going to act when we see the housing crisis being further added to by the slowing down of construction and development.

KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the answer from the minister since the Premier won't answer. When the Premier was asked about consolidating power around himself, he said, "I'm going to be held accountable by Nova Scotians and I welcome that. That's what I signed up for." I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, so far this session, the Premier has dodged accountability at every opportunity. He will not answer the Opposition's questions in Question Period. He only answers two sets of questions every day. If he doesn't like the facts, he says they were manufactured. He's dodged the media on multiple occasions. He attempted to coerce and remove the Speaker. He delays the release of critical health care statistics that make him look bad. And don't even get me started on FOIPOP.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier hides from institutions like the media and the Opposition that are meant to hold him accountable, could the Premier please explain exactly how he's accountable to Nova Scotians during his time in office?

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address this about hiring our friends. I would like to put out that at the Executive Panel on Housing we hired a former Liberal MLA. I

just want the members to know that we have respect for every member in the House. We will hire talent wherever we find it.

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

MAH: AFFORD. HOUSING COMM. - RESPECT

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Housing Commission's report makes a number of recommendations for the short-, medium-, and long-term, the very first of which is to establish a new independent provincial housing entity, a recommendation that the government has dismissed. Instead, this government is amalgamating the five regional housing authorities and dissolving their boards in favour of a new Crown corporation with an advisory board that is ultimately answerable to the minister. That doesn't sound like it will be operating independently, Mr. Speaker.

In April, the Premier stated, "We are acting with a sense of urgency and respecting the recommendations of that commission in every single way." I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: When and why did the Premier decide to stop respecting the Affordable Housing Commission?

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that, as all members of this House know, the Affordable Housing Commission report is something we took very, very seriously, and we dived into it. When we looked at exactly what the Affordable Housing Commission was getting at, we then had further information from the Auditor General. Frankly, the Auditor General took a deeper dive into what was going on in housing, and recommended changes. We looked at those changes. One of the effects we have is - for me as minister, I can answer in the House, I can answer in Cabinet scrums. We are accountable to the public here.

The five housing authorities were relatively unaccountable. Who ever heard of a question being answered by one of those five housing authority leaders? Who even knows who they are? The accountability is here through the House. We looked at what the Auditor General reported.

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker - that was quite the preamble - we are in a housing crisis, and a government-knows-best approach will not work. We must listen to experts.

The Affordable Housing Commission report notes that a critical success factor for creating a housing entity is to "ensure the new housing entity is an arm's length body, with an independent board of directors with representation from key stakeholder groups" - something I'm sure the AG approves of.

This government saw this recommendation from housing experts, and they created an entity that answers to the minister alone.

Mr. Speaker, if experts say that the independence of this housing entity is key to its success, why isn't the minister listening?

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question, but frankly, Housing Nova Scotia was something that was put in three different departments in six years by the previous government. There was very little oversight or management of what was going on there. There was a lot of work that needed to be done. We've taken on that task. We're managing that file.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

MAH: PUBLIC HOUSING - INVEST

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, in June the Auditor General released a report that revealed a wait-list for over 5,950 applicants for public housing - a new record high. We know that for many low-income Nova Scotians, public housing is the only safe and affordable housing option.

If we look to New Brunswick, they've taken action, investing over \$1 million for 380 new public housing units over the next four years, and renovating 110 vacant units. I can table that.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: With nearly 6,000 people on the wait-list for public housing, will this new PC housing entity commit to investing money into construction of more public housing?

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, this gives me the opportunity to talk about a program we announced this Summer called the Community Housing Acquisition Program. We funded it through our resources in Housing Nova Scotia - the ability for a non-profit to preserve almost 300 naturally occurring affordable units within the city. I'd like to tell you that we have many, many tenants there who are grateful for that. We will work on all aspects of this housing issue.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: The sad reality is that low-income seniors are shouldering the brunt of the housing crisis. I get many phone calls in my office daily from seniors, and over half of the Nova Scotians waiting for public housing are seniors on fixed incomes who are being priced out of the market. Yet there's no plan to increase public housing.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: What is the plan to get seniors off the housing wait-list and into homes?

[12:15 p.m.]

JOHN LOHR: I'd like to thank the member for the question. I can tell you things that we are doing. One of the things that we are doing is that we recognized when we came in and started managing this file that the turnover time was far too long for units in public housing. It was months and months and months. We're working on reducing the turnover time.

The Auditor General pointed out that we had an issue with over-housing, which means a single-person living in a four- or five-bedroom unit, and if we can reorganize that. This is one of the issues that we had with the five housing authorities - some we're doing a good job on it, and some were not.

This is where we need management and we're putting that management in place. That alone, if we can deal with the over-housing issue, would take maybe 1,000 people off the wait-list. Yes, we're extremely concerned about the issues with the wait-list. We're extremely concerned about the housing crisis.

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

DCS: HOUSING CRISIS - ACTION

KENDRA COOMBES: My question is for the Minister of Community Services. The number of people in Cape Breton who are finding themselves unhoused has exploded. The Ally Centre of Cape Breton has said that they have given out double the number of tents this year compared to last year. They expect the need to only increase. I'll table that.

Can the minister see that whatever this government is doing to solve the housing crisis in Cape Breton isn't working?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: I thank the member for this important question. We know that when anyone who finds themselves homeless, there are a number of complex reasons why they get there. This government has made a huge investment in our department to fight homelessness.

We have been working with a number of non-profits across this province, investing in short-term and long-term shelters, and we'll continue investing in those. We know that it's a really difficult time for someone who finds themselves homeless, but our office is open to helping, and we'll do what it takes to find them a more permanent solution.

KENDRA COOMBES: Tents are not homes and neither are shelters. We recently received the results of the 2021 Point-in-Time Homelessness count for Eastern Nova Scotia. The report found that there are 483 people experiencing homelessness in the six

eastern counties of the province. This includes 64 children under the care of someone experiencing homelessness.

The findings of the survey were that we have an urgent need for a rights-based approach to housing. Mr. Speaker. When can Cape Bretoners expect there to be zero people without a home in Cape Breton?

KARLA MACFARLANE: I wish that we would have no one homeless in Nova Scotia. I think everyone in this Chamber wishes that.

The reasons, again, for people who find themselves homeless could be addictions and mental health, or it could be due to the fact that they had domestic violence. There are a number of reasons. I know you all know why they would find themselves homeless.

The Department of Community Services is here to help. We will certainly find an interim solution. We know that the best place for anyone is to have a permanent home. We are always working towards that and that is why we work very closely with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We will find the solutions. We need a bit more time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MAH: HOUSING CRISIS - FIX

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians are struggling to find a home that they can actually afford and raise a family in, sometimes spending months if not years trying to find an affordable home to purchase or rent. The market is so saturated and vacancy rates are so low that they find nothing in their price range. This government said they were working at lightning speed, but things continue to get worse.

My question to the Premier is: How much longer will Nova Scotians have to struggle until this government delivers on their housing affordability promise?

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that as the member knows, we provided something that the HRM and our municipalities were asking for since 2016 - that's inclusionary zoning. I am very proud of that. That's a tool for our municipalities to use, and that is something we are doing, among many things.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: It's just words, Mr. Speaker, like the \$30 million they promised last year that was going to end homelessness, and they gave it to one of the largest developers in Nova Scotia, yet homelessness continues to rise.

The Affordable Housing Commission's report states that housing is a key determinant to health. To truly fix health care, we must address housing, homelessness and

poverty. We know that this government has said it will do whatever it takes to fix health care.

My question for the Premier is: Will they commit to do whatever it takes to fix the housing crisis that Nova Scotians are feeling from one corner of the province to the other?

JOHN LOHR: I'd like to point out to the member also that we've invested \$16.6 million in rapid housing initiatives, places like Coady's Place, the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, the Adsum Women and Children's Centre, and the North End Community Centre. We're investing across the spectrum of housing and in community housing. We're investing in co-op housing. So not only are we investing, as the member mentioned, in the for-profit and developers to provide affordable units there, we are also investing across the spectrum, Mr. Speaker.

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

MAH: AFF. STUDENT HOUSING - ACTION

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, when our post-secondary students returned to campus in September, there were many who were pretty anxious about the lack of availability of housing, so much so that the Dalhousie Students Union is reporting that there are hundreds of international students going to their school who don't have a place to live. It's not surprising, given that rent has increased as much as \$600 this year alone. I'm not so happy to table that.

My question is directed to the Minister of Advanced Education. Aside from the work being done on NSCC campuses, what is being done to provide students with housing that they can afford?

HON JOHN LOHR: Since this is directed at housing, I'd like to point out that the former government in eight years never built a new residence for any university, never saw that happen, never made it happen. The previous government to that never did.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has the floor.

JOHN LOHR: We are building three new NSCC centres right now.

BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, there certainly are examples. Port Hawkesbury and Lawrencetown are two examples that come to mind of work that was done under the previous government.

I wonder if when ministers see themselves on the media after this, if they would expect Nova Scotians to continue this back-and-forth that we continue to see from this

government. Nova Scotians just want answers. Why doesn't the minister get up, give an answer in such a way that tells Nova Scotians that there is a plan for the future around affordable housing? I'd like to know what it is for students specifically.

HON. BRIAN WONG: That's a very important question. We do realize that student housing is a concern. Students first, always, and that is what is always in my mind. I believe the minister opposite understands that as well.

We have committed to three NSCC student housing initiatives. Every time we open one bed for student housing, regardless if it's the NSCC or anywhere else, then it's one more for students, regardless of whether that's a university or the NSCC.

We are very proud to have the very first student housing strategy working with my counterpart in the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I only wish that we had a student housing strategy that . . .

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

DAE: STUDENT HOUSING - SUPPORT

FRED TILLEY: It may be "students first," but not in Cape Breton.

During Hurricane Fiona, we saw the incredible value and spirit of Cape Breton's students, especially our international students, who supported their community and helped them through the storm. Students aren't being supported by this government when it comes to housing. Students on Cape Breton Island are not finding affordable student housing and this government's NSCC housing announcement left Cape Breton out in the cold.

This government's housing plan leaves students on the Island completely behind. My question for the Minister of Advanced Education is: Why?

HON. BRIAN WONG: The member opposite said that we leave students out in the cold and don't think of students, but I believe he may have forgotten the initiatives that we've taken on with Cape Breton University and with the new Marconi Campus.

There's no doubt that student housing is an issue right across this province and right across this country. You know what? We've announced three very important housing initiatives already for students. We've only just begun. Hang on tight.

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's amazing that this minister is so readily looking to take credit for a new Marconi Campus which was designed, gotten ready, and being built based on the previous Liberal government's initiative. You might be there to cut the ribbon, but you didn't do the work or the homework.

We're seeing a very concerning housing trend for young people in this province. Students cannot find a place to live. Young professionals cannot find an affordable place to buy. Young adults are having to live with their parents longer. Home ownership amongst 25- to 29-year-olds has fallen by 8 per cent. For the minister, I will table that.

Considering the impact that the housing crisis is having on young adults in this province, will this government support a youth housing strategy?

HON. JOHN LOHR: Another thing that I am proud to mention that we have under way is that, as I mentioned and as recommended by the Affordable Housing Commission report, is the needs assessments. We have two needs assessments going on being done by Turner Drake & Partners.

One is a provincial housing needs assessment. That is online right now. I can tell you that we're having responses from all over the province. I don't know the results yet. We also have an African Nova Scotia needs assessment also being done by Turner Drake & Partners. We are looking into what needs to be done there.

We realize that the housing crisis is not only here in HRM but it's across every municipality and every town in the province. We're looking to address it and in order to know what has been identified by the Affordable Housing Commission report, we needed to have more information.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

LR: LOW WAGES FOR EDUC. SUPP. WKRS. - EXPLAIN

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I'll continue on the same theme - students first always.

My question is for the Premier. As of yesterday, 600 school board employees in the Valley are on strike fighting for fair wages. This includes many education assistants who provide critical care to students needing extra supports. Despite this essential service that they provide, the starting pay for education assistants in the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre of Education is minimum wage.

Without their education assistants, these students are not able to go to school like the rest of their classmates. One young student - God love him - is fighting on the picket line for his right to go to school and for his EA, Ashley's right to a fair wage.

Does the Premier believe that these workers are being paid fairly at minimum wage?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I know that this is a significant concern for anybody who is directly involved, whether they be the staff themselves, the parents of the children, and of course, the children. We know that the best place for children is to be in a place where they're learning.

I can't say too much because we believe in the collective bargaining process. The employer, I know, is ready to get back to the table. That's where a solution will be found, and we encourage that to happen.

SUZY HANSEN: I'm glad that the minister stepped up and said that a process is good because we've been talking about that at length over the past few days - about processes and how it's important.

Mr. Speaker, also striking are other school support workers, such as early childhood educators, student support workers, and many others - all of whom play a crucial role in children's lives and in the operation of our schools. This is not an isolated problem to this region.

Our province continues to have one of the lowest minimum wages in the country and a government that fails to recognize the value of workers in caring sectors. Strikes are looming in other areas as these wages remain far from a living wage.

My question is: With rising inflation and cost of living, these already too-low wages have become even more troubling. Why is this government allowing these hard-working and essential Nova Scotia workers to struggle?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I know there have been a lot of tables where we've had success. We've had a lot of success at the negotiating table. We've been in office now a little over a year, and there are a lot of successes to point to. I think this is a government that wants to negotiate, that wants to listen. I know for the union and for the workers, one of the big issues is wage parity. I also know that a solution has been put forth to achieve that, because it's something that's important to them.

Again, we want to listen. We want to go to the table. We want to find solutions.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MAH: AFFORDABLE RENT - SUPPORT

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, it isn't just young people who are finding it hard trying to come up with the money for rent and try to eventually own their own home. It's becoming harder for anyone to own a home in Nova Scotia.

[12:30 p.m.]

The portion of home renters in this province is 33 per cent - one third of our total population - which is the highest in Atlantic Canada and the third highest in all of the country. I'll table that.

My question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is: Our province is leading the country in renters as a share of households. Is the dream of home ownership for anyone except the wealthy now dead in Nova Scotia under his watch?

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I too share the concern. I want to see home ownership enabled in our province. I want to see people have that dream of home ownership. It's incredibly important to people's lives.

We've done several things, but one of the things we've done is we've doubled up the money in the Down Payment Assistance Program for new homeowners. We have changed the program guidelines in terms of the dollar value of the new home and the income level that can apply to be more realistic to the current situation. We've done that. I'm proud of that program, and we are watching that closely to see the kind of uptake we have.

IAIN RANKIN: Despite those initiatives, we're looking for results. Since this government has taken power, the number of people who are renting has gone up and the price of rent has gone up as well. A new report says that Nova Scotia has the second highest rents in the country. People are paying on average more than \$2,400 a month. I'll table that. We are more expensive than Ontario. We are more expensive than Quebec. We are the most expensive in all of Atlantic Canada.

My question to the minister is: With rents that are going up more and more - more and more unaffordable - where is government support for people who are renting?

JOHN LOHR: We recognize all of these concerns. We are acting in a space that hasn't had a lot of action in it. Frankly, the previous government didn't do a whole lot. If you asked me when the right time to start building was, I would have said three or four years ago because it takes time to build. We're taking action to see developments move ahead. We're taking action on the land inventory, for instance. We're looking at what land the Province has that we can make available for housing.

We realize there's a housing crisis. We're acting on the housing crisis on multiple fronts, including this one. We're very concerned about it, and we share the member's concern. I just wish they had started three, four years ago.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

MAH: RURAL HOUSING CHALLENGES - ACTION

RONNIE LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. When I speak to business leaders in my community, the number one challenge I hear they're facing is labour shortages. However, their concerns are not just about getting workers but finding housing for them.

Workers are unable to come to my region and other rural areas across Nova Scotia because there are no housing options available. My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is: When will this government take action and find real solutions for housing that will actually help the labour shortage in rural Nova Scotia?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I acknowledge that we see that all over the province. We see employers starting to build housing. Certainly, in my community in the Annapolis Valley, many employers have housing for their workers. They provide that, and we see that in other areas - the demand across the province.

This is something we see employers doing. We see it in Cumberland County with Oxford Frozen Foods.

It's a big concern. We've done a lot to enable building of housing. As I mentioned, the Affordable Housing Commission has recommended we have a needs survey across the province and that is under way right now.

RONNIE LEBLANC: Workers are key to helping our rural economy flourish. The labour shortages are a real challenge and workers are needed to grow the economy in rural Nova Scotia, but they can't come and work if they have nowhere to stay. I am hearing this in my community, and I know that members who represent other rural ridings across the province are hearing it too.

My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. When will housing challenges be addressed in rural Nova Scotia?

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, we've taken action on many fronts on the housing file. Another one I haven't mentioned yet is that we are working to enable the co-operative housing sector. If you have people in your community who want to get together and work at having a co-op home, we want to enable that too. We are enabling, we are funding the co-operative housing sector. We want that sector to grow as well. We are not picking any one sector. We are working in multiple areas.

All these areas will bear fruit, but it will take time. It takes time to build. We've seen record housing starts this past year, record construction, but we know there are many challenges, and we are working to see all these things addressed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

MAH: GOV'T HOUSING STOCK - BUILD

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for housing. I am watching with interest a lot of the media reports coming out of the CBRM. I'm seeing a strained relationship growing with our local government at home, whether it is through housing or Hurricane Fiona supports. There's a lot of concern for many of us that we're seeing more and more that that relationship is becoming more strained.

My question is regarding housing and my colleague from Northside-Westmount talked about it too. We've seen a lot of growth in the CBRM. We've seen a lot of international students come into the community, but housing is a major issue now in the CBRM. What we are not seeing is a lot of information or a lot of meetings nor support coming from the government.

My question to the minister is: What is his plan for housing supports in Sydney and the CBRM area?

HON. JOHN LOHR: As the member may know, we have a huge stock of public housing in the CBRM. We continue to renew and develop that. We're very concerned about housing across the province. Whatever we need to do we'll do in all parts of the province.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: That leads into my question, because I know that there are a number of parcels of land that have been looked at for housing development. I know the government is trying to attract local developers to come in and do some of that work and build some of that stock.

One of the questions that I've been asked, and my question has been asked at home, in talking with local government, is: Is this current government going to get into the housing businesses? Are they going to start looking at building their own inventory?

My question for the minister: Is the government looking at both options, whether it is through private developers, as he said, but is the government going to be looking at building their own stock?

JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. One of the things that we are doing, which includes the CBRM, is looking at the fact that the government owns about 100,000 parcels of land across the province. We're looking at what land we can make available for housing in all parts of the province, including the CBRM.

Are we building new housing stock? No. We are investing heavily, though, in the rental supplements, as the member knows. We are doing that across the province as well.

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

DAE: TA WAGES UNFAIR - AGREE

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Advanced Education. Last week over 1,500 staff at Dalhousie University went on strike. These workers, who include part-time faculty, teaching assistants, and senior lab instructors, are demanding better pay.

Dalhousie's teaching assistants and part-time academics earn some of the lowest wages amongst similar Canadian universities and they have not kept up with rising inflation. Last week, I shared the story of Katelyn, who is teaching a course in a lab but struggling to stay afloat.

The minister previously worked for years as an educator, and I know he values the important role educators play. Can the minister see it is unreasonable that teaching assistants at one of Canada's top universities are working extra jobs just to get by?

HON. BRIAN WONG: Of course, as a former educator - I think I'll always be an educator - I do value and see the importance of teaching assistants and markers throughout our education system.

This is unfortunate for students who have just gone through two years of COVID-19 and any type of disruption is not good for any of our students going forward. However, this is a negotiation that's going on between the university and the workers. I strongly encourage them to follow the process - yes, follow the process, because there is one - and take it back to the table and work something out in the interests of students.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that for many of the people on the picket line, they're still students as well, so they're trying to get through their education. It is a student issue.

Dalhousie is our largest university and sees over 20,000 students through its doors each year. Part-time faculty, teaching assistants, and instructors play a crucial role in educating and training future leaders. Their wages have remained stagnant since 2019 despite Dalhousie's budget surplus of \$69.5 million last year and the president receiving a 13 per cent wage increase last year.

Can the minister agree that stagnant wages that don't keep up with the cost of living for staff at Dalhousie are unsustainable and unfair?

BRIAN WONG: All of our universities right across Nova Scotia are independent. They are run by a board of governors. They have their own team that negotiates

remuneration for all workers and they do have to remain competitive with schools right across this country and right around the world.

I truly leave it to the university and I leave it to the union to work that out.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

LSI: IMMIGRANTS HOUSING SHORTAGE - ACTION

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, this government has an ambitious goal of doubling population to 2 million by 2060. Population growth is great to grow the economy, but the problem is that there aren't enough houses for people who are arriving in Nova Scotia. We know that a lot of newcomers are arriving with large families and it's really difficult for them when they go apply for housing. They're discriminated against, as well.

I ask the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration: What is the minister doing to ensure that when people arrive here, they have a place to call home?

HON. JILL BALSER: We are working very closely with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing to make sure that all newcomers who choose Nova Scotia as their home have a place to stay.

We know that Nova Scotia has an incredible history of welcoming newcomers time and time again and also in the case of humanitarian efforts. I also have to say that organizations step up in times of need, but we've also been very clear that our population growth strategy is planned, is strategic, and we're also recruiting the folks who we need to help build the housing that's needed for the entire province.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: That was a very nice answer and I thank the minister for that. However, I do have further.

Nova Scotia can only capitalize on the economic growth of immigration if it is done responsibly and with a plan for the new immigrants. The government has an opportunity to tackle both the labour shortages and to attract new immigrants by ensuring that skilled trades workers have their foreign credentials recognized.

As the minister just mentioned, I would like to know what they are doing specifically to attract new immigrants who can help build houses. What are you doing, exactly?

JILL BALSER: I would like to take the opportunity to say that we have launched a marketing campaign to make sure that we're targeting the skilled workers as well as health care workers across this country and around the world who want to come to Nova Scotia - that this is a place that they can call home. We know that talent that we need. That's why

the marketing campaign has been strategic in making sure that we're also calling young Nova Scotians back to this province.

[12:45 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, the energy in this province is incredible and we want young people to know that there is a place for them here where they can thrive. We want the talent that they can bring to this province. We're doing a lot of work on that marketing campaign. It's going to be great.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MAH: RURAL HOUSING STARTS DOWN - EXPLAIN

HON. KEITH IRVING: The government says that they are working at lightning speed to address the housing crisis. I was particularly interested in the minister's response about rural Nova Scotia and about record housing starts.

Let's talk about facts. While there is progress being made in Halifax - and I would say thanks to the great work at HRM - in rural Nova Scotia, housing starts have decreased by 20 per cent between January and August when compared to 2021. I will table that document. Time is of the essence here in rural Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: Question, please.

KEITH IRVING: Will the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, from rural Nova Scotia, explain why the stats provided by the government show that in fact housing starts are slowing by 20 per cent in rural Nova Scotia?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I would like to point out that one of the things that we've done as a government is called MOST, More Opportunities for Skilled Trades. This is for young people in the skilled trades, and we know that one of the issues in housing and construction is the shortage of skilled trades. It's a huge issue. We're addressing that issue as well. I'm very proud of our government's endeavours.

KEITH IRVING: In rural Nova Scotia, people are couch-surfing, moving back with their parents, and are unable to afford a home. We hear the government stand up and say how great they're doing, but the facts are the facts. Housing starts are down by 20 per cent in rural Nova Scotia. My question to the Municipal Affairs and Housing, who is from rural Nova Scotia: The facts are showing that this government is leaving rural Nova Scotia behind with respect to housing starts.

JOHN LOHR: I would like to say that we are working very hard across the board. I mentioned the Down Payment Assistance Program, the MOST program. We are also

doing the needs assessment, we're working with the community housing sector and all of these sectors. We're doing an immense amount of activity.

Housing takes time to build, as everyone knows. You just don't say, we're going to have a house here tomorrow and it shows up tomorrow. It takes time. We're working on all of those things.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

RTA: RENTS UNAFFORDABLE - EXPLAIN

HON. TONY INCE: The average rent in Canada is \$2,043, but in Nova Scotia, the average rent is \$2,453. That's \$410 over the national average, with the rent cap. We are clearly in a housing crisis and the government is not acting. My question to the minister: Does the government believe that paying over \$2,000 in rent is affordable?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: We recognize on this side of the House that we are in a housing crisis. I echo the comments of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, that I wish that the previous government would have taken action years ahead of where we are today. I'm very proud of the actions that our government has taken so far.

What we have done so far to support tenants in our province is extend the rent cap until 2023, an initiative that was started by the previous government. Under my watch, we continue to look at balancing the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and landlords, and I'll continue to do that.

TONY INCE: The government is not acting fast enough on bringing affordable rents to Nova Scotia. As a result, the average rent in Nova Scotia is the second-highest in the country. My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Why does this government think that it's acceptable that we have the second-highest rent in the country?

HON. JOHN LOHR: We recognize the issue, and we know that this is a factor of supply and demand, that there's huge demand. People recognize Nova Scotia as a great place to live. People are coming here from across the country, from all over the world. We welcome them. As the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration says, Nova Scotia is a welcoming place. We need those people. We need their energy, we need their talent, and we will find a solution to the housing crisis.

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

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 the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

THE SPEAKER: We'll move into the Committee of the Whole House on Bills, but we'll take a recess in order for everybody to set up.

[12:50 p.m. The House recessed.]

[1:02 p.m. The House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on Bills with Deputy Speaker Angela Simmonds in the Chair.]

[8:40 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Angela Simmonds assumed the Chair.]

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

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole House on Bills has met and considered the following bills: Bill Nos. 196, 198, 200, 204, 206, 207, 210 and 211 without amendments and Bill No. 203 with certain amendments. The Chair has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Madam Speaker, that concludes government business for the day. (Applause) It's amazing - all of a sudden now, everyone likes me. (Laughter) It wasn't like that yesterday.

I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Wednesday, October 26th between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. After late debate, government business will include second reading of Bill Nos. 208, 212, 214, 215, 216, 219, 222, 223, 224, 225, 227, and 228.

Tomorrow is also Opposition Day, so I will also call on the Opposition House Leader to call his Opposition business.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I figured I was the least most popular person in the House at this point. So for Opposition business tomorrow, we'll be calling Bill No. 233, the Need a Family Practice Registry Accountability Act, and Bill No. 217, the Residential Tenancies Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House meet again on October 26th from 12:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until tomorrow at 12:00 p.m.

[The House rose at 8:43 p.m.]