



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Karla MacFarlane

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First Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2023

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2023

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Karla MacFarlane

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Lisa Lachance, Danielle Barkhouse, Nolan Young

THE SPEAKER: Order. We will now begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

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

Bill No. 332 - An Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994-95, the Workers' Compensation Act. (Hon. Jill Balsler)

Bill No. 334 - An Act to Amend Chapter 197 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Health Services and Insurance Act. (Hon. Brian Comer)

Bill No. 337 - An Act to Amend Chapter 25 of the Acts of 2004, the Electricity Act. (Hon. Tory Rushton)

Bill No. 339 - An Act Respecting Certain Financial Measures (Fall 2023). (Hon. Allan MacMaster)

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

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

The honourable member for Kings West.

CHRIS PALMER: Speaker, I beg leave to table the 2023 Annual Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Hants East.

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Speaker, I beg leave to table the Annual Report of 2023 of the Standing Committee on Health.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: Pursuant to Section 18(4) of the Auditor General Act, I am tabling the following reports of the Auditor General to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly: *Follow-up of 2018, 2019, and 2020 Performance Audit Recommendations; Ground Ambulance Services, Department of Health and Wellness and Emergency Medical Care Inc.; Investigation of Island Employment Association; Provincial Fire Safety Management, Office of the Fire Marshal.*

I will table those, and there is a copy for each of the Leaders.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

HON. JILL BALSER: Speaker, before I read my notice of motion, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

JILL BALSER: In the gallery today, we have representatives from the Nova Scotia Branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the voice of the Ukrainian community in the province. Could they please rise as I introduce them: Dr. Bohdan Luhovyy, Board President; Vice-Presidents Lyubov Zhyznomirska and Olha Khaperska; Board Treasurer Sergiy Zhyznomirskyy; and board members Stanislav Serebriakov and Olena Lugova.

I would ask the members of the House to join me in giving them a warm welcome, and thank them for the work they do to grow the Ukrainian community here in Nova Scotia. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

RESOLUTION NO. 726

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

Whereas Sunday, October 1, 2023 marked the first year for the East Coast Ukrainian Festival, which took place at the Canadian Museum of Immigration; and

Whereas the festival was organized by the Nova Scotia branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, or UCC, to celebrate Ukrainian culture and showcase the contributions of the Ukrainian-Canadian community to the vibrant cultural and social life of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has been a vital partner in Nova Scotia's efforts to welcome Ukrainians who have been displaced by Russia's unjust invasion of Ukraine, and this festival provided an opportunity for Nova Scotia's Ukrainian community to come together in celebration and solidarity;

Therefore be it resolved that in recognition of the ongoing work of the Nova Scotia branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to support the growing Ukrainian population in Nova Scotia and celebrate Ukrainian culture, on October 24, 2023, the Government of Nova Scotia thank the UCC and recognize October 1, 2023 as the first year of the East Coast Ukrainian Festival.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

[1:15 p.m.]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, in the gallery today we have the Halifax Workers' Action Centre. From there, we have Antonia Chircop, Brian Crawford, and Suzanne MacNeil, who are here today to witness the tabling of this bill.

Bill No. 366 - An Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, to Protect Workers from Tip and Gratuity Theft. (Kendra Coombes)

Bill No. 367 - An Act to Provide for the Development of a Charter for Cape Breton Regional Municipality. (Hon. Derek Mombourquette)

Bill No. 368 - An Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998, the Municipal Government Act, and Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008, the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Respecting Legislative Requests. (Lorelei Nicoll)

Bill No. 369 - An Act to Amend Chapter 149 of the Acts of 1920, The Riverport Electric Light Act for Polling District No. 2, in the County of Lunenburg. (Hon. Susan Corkum Greek)

Bill No. 370 - An Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008, the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Respecting Property Tax Reductions. (Hon. Ben Jessome)

Bill No. 371 - An Act to Amend Chapter 293 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Motor Vehicle Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

Bill No. 372 - An Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, to Protect Against Wage Theft. (Kendra Coombes)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

RESOLUTION NO. 727

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

Whereas, per Resolution No. 385, this House has voted in five deputy speakers: one from the Official Opposition; one from the third party; and the other three on the government side; and

Whereas the Official Opposition no longer has representation in this honourable role; and

Whereas the Speaker and the deputy speaker while in the Chair must remain neutral, it is only fair to have representation from the Official Opposition in order to maintain the highest integrity of this office;

Therefore be it resolved that, in addition to the honourable members for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, Chester-St. Margaret's, and Shelburne, the honourable member for Sydney-Membertou be a Chair of committees and deputy speaker of the House of Assembly, and the annual salary of the deputy speaker, established pursuant to the House of Assembly Act, be divided equally between the four Chairs of committees and deputy speakers, as per this Assembly's most recent resolution on this matter, Resolution No. 385.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver. Is it agreed? There are several Noes. The notice of motion is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

TRAGIC ACCIDENT: IMPACT ON FAMILIES - RECOG.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Thank you for allowing me to rise in my place today and share that there are a lot of heavy hearts in Springhill and around the area in the last few days after a tragic accident Saturday evening just outside Amherst. I wanted to take a few minutes to recognize our first responders and certainly the families and friends who are impacted so severely in Cumberland and throughout Nova Scotia, as a matter of fact. I wanted to make sure the families know that we here in the House are certainly thinking about them at this time of need.

THE SPEAKER: We'll take a moment of silence. Please rise.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MIDEAST CRISIS: NEED FOR CEASEFIRE - RECOG.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: We in the Nova Scotia NDP caucus condemn the brutal and terrifying attacks by Hamas and the bombing and violence inflicted upon Palestinian civilians in the region. Thousands of lives have been lost and there is an unfolding humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

We stand with all Nova Scotians, especially Jews and Palestinians, as well as those around the world who are grieving and worried for their friends and family in the region. We must all work actively to address the rising tone of hate, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia we've seen around the globe following these attacks.

I ask all members of this Legislature to join me in amplifying calls for the release of hostages, the establishment of humanitarian pathways, a political and diplomatic solution to the crisis, and a ceasefire in the region.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

MIDEAST CRISIS: NEED FOR PEACE - RECOG.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We all rose in this House to condemn the brutal and vicious attacks on innocent Israeli civilians and Israel itself. In the days since we've done

that, we have seen a rapid escalation in violence and in the loss of life, both amongst Israelis and Palestinians. Our hearts are broken by this, and I know all of us share the fear of regional escalation and what that can entail on the impacted lives in the region and here at home. Certainly, we need to affirm that both Palestinians and Israelis have the right to live in safety, security, and peace. I do want to add my voice to encourage all sides to take necessary steps to bring peace, security, and safety back to the region. As a wise person once said, there is no answer for peace; peace is the answer.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

MIDEAST CRISIS: ISRAEL DEFENCE RIGHT - RECOG.

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Speaker, obviously, we're horrified by what we see taking place certainly in many parts of the world, but definitely in this most recent conflict. I just want to reiterate for the House and for all Nova Scotians that this is not a war between Palestinians and Israelis. It's not a battle between Islam and Judaism. This is a war on terror.

The attack by Hamas and the continued acts of aggression against Israel - I feel very strongly that Israel has a right to defend itself. I stand with Israel in this conflict as they try to stamp out Hamas and the terrorist activity that's happening. I will stand, as will our caucus, and we'll encourage members of the House to stand with Israel and its right to defend itself.

I cannot stand behind the member's call for a ceasefire. I can only stand behind Israel and its right to defend itself.

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

JOHN WHITE: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

JOHN WHITE: I want to direct the House's attention to your gallery, the Speaker's Gallery, where joining us today are members - local heroes of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team of the Fire Service of Nova Scotia. I'll ask that they rise when I call their name. Stan Beaton, zone coordinator and peer member; Scott Penner, mental health professional and peer member; Dr. Sandy Fraser, mental health professional and past clinical director; Mary Hanneman, mental health professional and current clinical director; and Wendy Rafuse, mental health professional and chairperson. (Standing ovation)

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

CISM TEAM: FIRST RESPONDERS SUPPORT - RECOG.

JOHN WHITE: From Glace Bay to Yarmouth, rural Nova Scotia's first responders are supported by Nova Scotia's Critical Incident Stress Management Team. A subcommittee to the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia, the team is made up of 50 mental health professionals and specially trained peers from four zones across the province. When citizens call 911 on the worst day of their lives, it is our first responders who report to these extraordinary situations. The CISM team's goal is to keep these strong people strong.

By way of pre-incident and debriefing sessions, this team is building the resiliency of our first responders. Part of this process is for the first responders to understand that their reactions are ordinary reactions to extraordinary situations. In addition to this team's response to fires, motor vehicle collisions, and drowning fatalities, this team has also worked on some more notable incidents such as Hurricane Fiona, the Shelburne wildfires, West Hants flood, Nova Scotia's mass casualty shooting, and the downed Swissair Flight 111.

Speaker, last year alone, this team worked with over 1,200 first responders and had interactions with over 400 outside organizations. The five individuals who stand before us represent the CISM team of Nova Scotia, a team whose work is vital to the provincial emergency response team. I ask that all members again please give a round of applause for these local heroes. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

MIDEAST CRISIS: NEED FOR PEACE - RECOG.

ALI DUALE: Today I would like to acknowledge the innocent civilian lives lost in Palestine and Israel. I would like also to give my condolences to members of the Palestinian community in my constituency who have lost their families and loved ones due to the collective punishment of innocent people.

I'm disappointed that this House passed a resolution on Thursday without acknowledging the suffering of the Palestinian people and their loss of dignity, freedom and human rights. Speaker, in this House I pray for peace for humanity.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

[1:30 p.m.]

SEWARD, SUSAN: MOXIE ECO-SALON - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, I rise today to fete a new small business owned by a Dartmouth North resident, Susan Seward.

Opened in June 2023, Moxie Eco-Salon & Boutique is a downtown Dartmouth hair salon offering expert haircutting, styling, and colouring services, with a focus on sustainability delivered using environmentally conscious principles and practices.

Susan Seward has been a stylist for more than 13 years. She trained at Toronto's Aveda Institute and refined her skills working in top eco-salons in Toronto and Halifax before opening her own salon.

The vision for Moxie was to create a space that would be warm, welcoming, inclusive, and true to Susan's values of caring for her community and for the environment. Moxie is a member of Green Circle Salons, an organization that helps recycle salon waste. The boutique portion of Moxie also offers eco-friendly hair care and giftware, along with a curated selection of vintage clothing.

Susan is thrilled to be a part of the downtown business community, and I am thrilled that Susan chose to do business on that side of the harbour. If you're wondering where I get my hair done - because I know that a lot of people ask - now you know.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

FORMER SPEAKER - BIRTHDAY WISHES

THE PREMIER: Speaker, I just want to take a moment and wish happy birthday to a former Speaker of the House, the member for Victoria-The Lakes. (Applause)

Thank you for your incredible service to your community and to our province over a number of years, and thank you for your friendship and support of all Nova Scotians. I won't say how many it is, but it's a significant one.

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

HON. BEN JESSOME: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, please.

BEN JESSOME: In our West Gallery today, we are joined by Kingswood's Katrina Murray, her mother Terri, and Master Ken MacKenzie of MacKenzie Atlantic Taekwon-Do. Please give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

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

MURRAY, KATRINA: TAEKWON-DO MEDAL WIN - RECOG.

HON. BEN JESSOME: Speaker, I'm privileged today to introduce Katrina MacKenzie, a black belt member of MacKenzie Atlantic Taekwon-Do in Hammonds Plains. Her Master Instructor, Ken MacKenzie, is with us today as well.

She started with MacKenzie in 2017, making significant progress in earning her black belt. Katrina represented Nova Scotia as a member of Team Canada in 2023 this September at the ITF Taekwon-Do World Championship in Tampere, Finland.

There are a few other Nova Scotians whom I will recognize if I have time to, but at 15 years old, this was a huge accomplishment representing her country at the World Championships. She did very well in the championship and earned a bronze medal in the Pre-Junior +60kg Sparring division. I will add that she is coming off two gold medals in Windsor this weekend.

I would like members to recognize her for her accomplishments and wish her all the best as she continues to strive for the next. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations and welcome to the House. It's an honour to have you.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MAYWORKS FESTIVAL: FILM SCREENING - RECOG.

GARY BURRILL: I'd like to extend the congratulations of the House to the Mayworks Festival of Working People and the Arts on its compelling and successful April 30th to June 6th season, and particularly their screening of *A More Radiant Sphere*, filmmaker Sara Wylie's documentary on the life work and legacy of Joe Wallace.

Joe Wallace is one of the truly singular figures in the political and literary history of our province. In 1920, he was general secretary of the Independent Labour Party of Nova Scotia - precursor of the CCF and NDP - which won five seats in the election that year. Together with the United Farmers, it became the first political formation of the left to form the Official Opposition in Nova Scotia. Wallace was the ILP candidate in that election. He was also a poet and a formative voice in the tradition of working-class poetry in Nova Scotia.

Filmmaker Sara Wylie was present following the screening. She is Wallace's great-great niece. The family connection and socialist politics mingled warmly at this excellent event.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

QUEENS MANOR REC. DEPT.: AWD. RECIP. - CONGRATS.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the recreation department from the Queens Manor long-term care facility in Liverpool. The team were the recipients of the Trailblazer Award at the recent Nursing Homes of Nova Scotia Association Long Term Care Awards of Excellence Gala. The award celebrates outside-the-box thinking and developing and implementing innovative practices that improve and stimulate residents' care - in effect, challenging the status quo of resident and staff interaction in a positive, original, and inclusive manner.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the recreation department and all at Queens Manor on winning this high-profile and prestigious award. The quality of care they provide is second to none and I am so extremely proud that Queens County has such a wonderful facility for its seniors.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

COMEAU, ARCADE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

RONNIE LEBLANC: Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Arcade Comeau, posthumously inducted into the Nova Scotia Forestry Hall of Fame. Born in Concession, he attended the Maritime Forest Ranger School in 1965 and played a pivotal role in la forêt acadienne, empowering Clare's woodlot owners. Additionally, he co-founded the Western Woodlot Services Cooperative, serving woodlot owners in the seven western counties.

Arcade was the go-to for all forestry matters, offering invaluable guidance. His passing on September 19, 2022 marked the loss of a forestry icon in Western Nova Scotia. In March 2023, at the Nova Scotia Forest Professionals banquet, his legacy was celebrated with his induction into the Nova Scotia Forestry Hall of Fame.

I urge all members to join me in recognizing Arcade, his family, friends, and colleagues on this well-deserved honour. Merci.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SOULS HBR. RESCUE MISSION: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

SUZY HANSEN: Speaker, I rise today to recognize an amazing organization in the North End community, the Souls Harbour Rescue Mission. They serve local families as well as seniors from neighbouring affordable-housing blocks by offering free food, clothing, toiletries, and household items.

The drop-in centre has become a place of community. Their guests include all those who may be facing hunger, homelessness, poverty, abuse, and addictions. An afternoon at the drop-in means free local calls, the daily papers, and magazines, as well as computers and free income tax returns when in season. There is always a friendly face and someone to talk to. Up to 150 hot, nutritious lunches are served every weekday at Souls Harbour Rescue Mission.

I would like all members to join me in recognizing Souls Harbour Rescue Mission for their hard work and dedication to providing a safe place to take those first steps to health and healing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

LOHNES, BARRY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. KENT SMITH: I rise today to bring recognition to the late Barry Lohnes of Musquodoboit Harbour. Barry was posthumously presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Diver Certification Board of Canada for his service to the underwater industry in Canada. Surrounded by family and friends, his wife, Patricia, graciously accepted the honour at the 2023 Canadian Underwater Conference and Exhibition.

Barry was an innovative business owner who established Dominion Diving as Canada's largest diving and ROV company. He was well-known in the waters of Halifax Harbour and many other bodies of water around Atlantic Canada and the world. He is remembered for his love of the water and sense of adventure.

I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in remembering Barry for his work in dive safety and his many contributions to the diving and marine communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

EAST COAST UKR. FEST.: FUNDRAISING - RECOG.

HON. KELLY REGAN: What a delight it was to have members of the Ukrainian-Canadian community here in Nova Scotia introduced earlier today. I actually attended the event that the minister referred to as well. I had an email from the congress the other day and they actually had 2,500 people attend that particular event down at Pier 21. It

probably helped that we had five cruise ships in port that particular day. They also raised \$13,500 to support Ukraine in its war against Russia.

I just wanted to congratulate the folks who joined us here in the Legislature today and wish them all the best as a proud Canadian of Ukrainian descent.

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

VICTORIA MINES: PLAYGROUND OPENING - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: September 10th marked the Victoria Mines playground grand opening, hosted by the Victoria Mines Recreation Association. The playground and park are dedicated to the memories of two people who went too soon but left lasting impressions on the community: Cody Burke and Sonya Chiasson.

The playground and park were a labour of love for the community, and the grand opening was the perfect celebration of all the work that went into revitalizing the community park. The playground and park are stunning. It is a beautiful place for children to play and for the community to gather.

I look forward to seeing the association's plans for the park continue to develop. Thank you to everyone who worked hard to make this dream a reality.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

HOSPITAL HELP DAY: FUNDRAISING EVENT - RECOG.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Speaker, St. Martha's Regional Hospital Foundation is hosting Hospital Help Day on Wednesday, October 25th. Raffle tickets for five prize packages can be purchased by calling or dropping by the Antigonish Market Square location.

Money raised from this event is used to purchase equipment for St. Martha's Regional Hospital to enhance care and the working environment. The Hospital Help Day has been a success for 30 years, thanks to the support of our community. The prize packages have been provided by generous local businesses and the event has been broadcast in its entirety by 989 XFM.

To make this such a great success, there is an enormous number of volunteers who answer the phones, organize the tickets, collect the prizes, and much more. Thank you to the St. Martha's Regional Hospital Foundation, our local businesses, Ken Farrell and 989 XFM, the volunteers, and all those who support Hospital Help Day. I encourage everyone to get their tickets.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

CBU INT. STUDENTS: IMPACT ON COM. - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Speaker, I rise on my feet - I never had a chance to do this yet since I've been in the Legislature. As the Fall came upon the community, thousands of students came to Cape Breton University to study. It has been fantastic what has been happening at the university. We have students from all over the world, and it plays not only an important part for CBU but also for the whole community: thousands of students coming into the community who participate in many of our community activities, who of course study when they are at CBU, and who bring a lot of culture and celebration to the community.

I rise in my place to recognize all the international students who are coming from all over the world to attend CBU. I wish them all the very best in their studies. I also want to thank them for everything they do to help support our community.

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

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction relative to my member's statement.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

LISA LACHANCE: In the gallery today are Cindy Gates-Dee, Gordon Dee, Jacob MacDonald, and Dawn Chiasson to witness a memorial statement of their son, husband, and friend. Let's welcome them.

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

DEE, LIAM: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

LISA LACHANCE: I rise today to honour the life of Liam Dee. Liam had a robust and varied life that included eel fishing, sewing, gardening, furniture refinishing, hunting, farming, volunteering, and travelling.

Liam attended the Maritime College of Forest Technology following his graduation from West Kings District High School. He then decided a career in health care was his calling, so he completed the Continuing Care Assistant program at NSCC Annapolis Valley Campus in Middleton, then went on to St. Francis Xavier University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2021. He began working for the VON Canada in New Minas.

Liam joyfully married the love of his life, best friend, and partner in thrifting, Jacob MacDonald, in March 2022. Liam was passionate about social justice issues. He participated in StFX Pride and marched in his first Halifax Pride parade in 2018.

Before his passing at age 26, Liam acknowledged that, although his life was very short, he felt he had achieved all his goals and felt at peace. Speaker, I ask all members to honour the life of Liam Dee.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

[1:45 p.m.]

SAWLER GARDENS: CONTRIBS. TO AGRIC. - THANKS

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Sawler Gardens of Berwick on their immense contributions to the Nova Scotian agricultural communities. Founders Ron and Marg Sawler operated their family farm, Sawler Gardens, with sons Mark, Roger, and Peter for many years, growing onions, carrots, beets, and other crops. They were a leading vegetable producer in our province. Millions of pounds of produce were grown every year. Many thousands of pounds of excess produce were contributed to food banks each year.

Ron Sawler, now deceased, was known for his innovative farming methods, particularly field levelling. His many levelled fields will benefit our province in perpetuity.

Please join me in thanking my dear friends, the Sawler family of Berwick, for their incredible contribution to agriculture in Nova Scotia. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

HOUSING CRISIS: NEED FOR ACTION - RECOG.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, the housing crisis is real. There has been a lot of debate among politicians and governments on who is responsible. We need to get past the political partisanship and do what's right.

Here's the human truth on the housing crisis:

- Senior male, eviction notice
- Father and son, homeless
- Working couple, eviction notice
- Single male, sleeping on a bench
- Senior female, eviction notice
- Single male, lost his home

- Family with three children, eviction notice
- Family, eviction notice
- Family with five children, fixed-term lease not being renewed
- Senior female, inadequate housing
- Senior male, could not afford to pay his rent
- Single mom with two children, eviction notice
- Single female, unable to afford rent
- Senior male, lost his home
- Single male, has been homeless for three years
- Family of seven, inadequate housing
- Single female, cannot afford rent
- Single pregnant female, homeless
- Senior female, inadequate housing

I'm going to stand on my feet each and every single day to shine a light on this housing crisis until something is done. (Applause)

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

DEE FAMILY: FIGHT FOR JUSTICE - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I rise to honour the family of Liam Dee for continuing his fight for social justice. Liam Dee knew the rare cancer he had meant that his organs would be too damaged to donate. The 26-year-old was grateful his tissues, including skin, corneas, tendons, and bones, could still go to people who needed them.

However, his tissues were rejected when he died in November 2022. His mother and husband learned from reading Liam's medical records that his "homosexual status," as noted on a screening form by a tissue specialist, meant he was declined as a high-risk donor.

Cindy and Jacob's mission now is to file a case with the Canadian Human Rights Commission so that others are not stigmatized and that people on long wait lists for organs and tissues are not deprived of them. "If he couldn't leave a legacy in helping other people with his tissues, then at least I could try to help change some of these policies."

I ask all members to honour the family of Liam Dee. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

DNRR STAFF: DISASTER RELIEF - THANKS

HON. BRIAN COMER: Speaker, I rise in my place today to recognize the incredible staff of the Cape Breton District Office of the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables.

Time and time again, these dedicated civil servants go above and beyond for their community. Recently, our province had certainly gone through some challenging times with natural disasters, which were all supported by staff from DNRR districts across the province. The Cape Breton team rose up to this challenge to assist with the post-Fiona cleanup across Cape Breton.

This year was Cape Breton District's turn in assisting their fellow Nova Scotians with the wildfires in Halifax and Shelburne Counties. I just want to thank the staff at this office: Matthew Peck, John Sterling, Glen Adams, Dave Osborne, Evan Boudreau, Glenn Wallace, Dave Young, Mark MacPhail, Kalen MacMullin and Josh Kruger.

I ask that all members please join me in thanking the staff for their dedicated service to our province. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

ADAMSON, AGAR: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. KEITH IRVING: Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to a long-time resident of Wolfville and professor of Political Science at Acadia University, the late Agar Adamson. Last month, political science students of Agar's and fellow faculty colleagues organized a political science panel discussion at Acadia in recognition of Agar's many years of inspired teaching, his lifelong commitment to his students, and for his expertise in Nova Scotia government, politics of Canada, and the Japanese political system.

After I entered politics in 2013, whenever I encountered Agar, he would typically offer helpful insight and occasionally well-intentioned critique of the political issues of the day. I deliberately use the words "well-intentioned critique," because Agar's commentary was never mean-spirited. His many years immersed in the world of political science has given him perspective, balance, and understanding - the essence of good political insight.

I ask all members of this House to join me in paying tribute to Professor Adamson, a model of an honest, diligent, dedicated, hard-working, and humble Nova Scotian who left a legacy of family, scholarship, and encouraging the next generation of political science students. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

THARMARATNAM, THIVJAN: INCL. N.S. DIR. - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, this past Summer, Inclusion Nova Scotia named Dartmouth North resident Thivjan Tharmaratnam as its new executive director. Thivjan has a long history of working in community development, including in Toronto with Community Living Ontario, with Futurpreneur Canada, as the director of community economic development with the Town of New Glasgow, and most recently as the COO of YMCA in Kijipuktuk.

Inclusion Nova Scotia is a provincial not-for-profit organization committed to ensuring that individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families have the support they need to live full lives in their communities. It is a founding member of the Disability Rights Coalition of Nova Scotia, which has fought to end unnecessary institutionalization, long wait times for community living, and forced moves to faraway areas for folks with disabilities.

I am thrilled that Thiv and his adorable family have chosen to make Dartmouth North home. I ask everyone in the House to join me in congratulating him on his new role as executive director of Inclusion Nova Scotia. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

W. HANTS COYOTES: ASSOC. OF YR. AWD. - CONGRATS.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate West Hants Coyotes Minor Baseball Association, which after only two short years was recently named Association of the Year by Baseball Nova Scotia.

The Coyotes can also boast that their very own Kim Frank was also named Baseball Nova Scotia's volunteer of the year. When Kim is not in the den canteen feeding the masses, she is often busy as association treasurer or helping to organize tournaments or provincials. Kim always has her hand up to help, and because of her Facebook Live videos, she is known as the voice of the Coyotes and the heart of the team.

Kim is a mother, former principal, and volunteer. Her heart of gold, contagious laugh, and determined spirit make her a true pillar not only in the baseball world but in our entire community.

I'd like to congratulate and recognize the hard work by all the coaches, players, parents, board members, and volunteers involved with the West Hants Coyotes on a job well done. (Applause)

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

VOLS.: HFX. WEST ECUM. FOOD BANK - RECOG.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Speaker, it's with great pleasure that I extend heartfelt congratulations to the dedicated volunteers of the Halifax West Ecumenical Food Bank, recognized as the 2023 HRM Volunteer Award winners in the group category. These remarkable volunteers selflessly contribute 500 hours each month to ensure the efficient operation of the food bank, which is based out of the Salvation Army's Fairview Citadel, located in Fairview-Clayton Park. Their tireless dedication and unwavering commitment have not only sustained this essential community service but have also earned them well-deserved recognition.

The roots of this invaluable service run deep, as it was established three decades ago and has since grown to become a lifeline for over 300 families each month, many of whom are newcomers to Canada. This prestigious award was presented to two of the food bank's dedicated volunteers, Harold and Marian Smith. Their exemplary service is a testament to the power of community and the positive impact that dedicated individuals can have on the lives of so many.

I invite all members to join me in celebrating the outstanding contributions of the Halifax West Ecumenical Food Bank and its volunteers, whose generosity and commitment continue to make a profound difference in our community. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

TRAGIC ACCIDENT: IMPACT ON FAMILIES - RECOG.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, today I rise with a heavy heart to recognize a tragic accident that occurred late Saturday night in Fort Lawrence in Cumberland North. This tragic accident took the lives of three Cumberland South residents: a young grandmother, a young father, and a two-month-old infant. The lone survivor of that vehicle is a young mother, and we send her our prayers and our sympathies at this time.

We also are thinking of the survivors in the other vehicle: a young man and a young woman. We're sending today our thoughts of all the family and friends. Our county has experienced too much tragedy in the last three years - sometimes too much to bear for the grieving hearts.

In addition to family and friends, I also want to acknowledge our first responders, the RCMP, the paramedics, our emergency room staff, and our surgical team who helped to respond to these emergencies. Together we are one family, and together we grieve.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

SCHOOL SUPP. WORKERS: STRIKE SUPPORT - RECOG.

GARY BURRILL: I'd like the record of the House to bear witness to an extraordinary fact in the life of the constituency office of Halifax Chebucto. From May 10th, the first day of the strike by the school support workers of CUPE 5047 in the HRM, until June 20th, their return to work following acceptance of the tentative agreement, 100 per cent of the emails about the strike received in our office, without a single exception, were in support of the school support workers and their union.

I have never before experienced, in the context of a strike, such complete unanimity of public opinion expressed through hundreds of emails, all of them individually composed.

Looking back now across the five weeks of that strike, I want to register my admiration for the support workers of the public schools of Halifax Chebucto: Halifax Central Junior High, Sir Charles Tupper Elementary, Westmount Elementary, St. Agnes Junior High, Oxford School and St. Catherine's Elementary, and for all those from other schools, such as Burton Ettinger Elementary and St. Stephen's Elementary, who stood with them on the lines at Oxford and St. Agnes. They stood together then and they will stand together still when the current contract soon enough expires.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

MACALPINE, JAMES DONALD: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. JILL BALSER: It is with great sadness I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of James Donald MacAlpine, who sadly passed away in the spring of 2023. Jim, or Old Jim as many called him, grew up in Hassett and served the community of Digby for over 50 years as a mechanic and owner of T&C Motors. Jim was a loving husband, brother, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. To Ruth, Jimmy, Ronnie, Sharon, and Mark, the entire Balsler family is with you during this difficult time.

We all loved and cared for Jim deeply. Jim was a father and grandfather figure to many who worked at T&C Motors, including my sisters and me - we worked there for many years as teenagers. Jim actually sold me my first car and hired me as the first girl ever to pump gas at his shop. I will never forget the mornings and evenings spent at T&C Motors, because you were always with family when you were around Jim and Ruth.

I'd like to send my deepest sympathies to the entire MacAlpine family. Jim will be missed by everyone who knew him and he was a true asset to the community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BEDFORD: OPENING OF TWO SCHOOLS - RECOG.

BRAEDON CLARK: It's always a great moment in a community and a constituency when a new school opens. We were lucky enough in Bedford South this past month to have two new schools open: West Bedford School, which is a pre-Primary to Grade 8 school; and West Bedford High School, which is a Grade 9 to Grade 12 school; led by Principal Susan Casey at West Bedford and Principal Sean MacDonald at the high school.

It's a huge site - 2,000 students between the schools. It's an amazing thing to see the schools open after many years under construction. I know they'll be pillars of the community for many decades to come. I just want to wish all the students, staff, parents, and administrators at these two schools all the best as they work through their first year.

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

WHITNEY PIER: "MINNIE" BAZAAR - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: The 3rd Annual "Minnie" Bazaar Kids Day was held Friday, August 4th in honour of Whitney Pier resident Valerie Green Andrea. She has been described as a role model for youth and was known to hold little bazaars for children. She is remembered for her spirit and contributions to many community efforts.

Although the "Minnie" Bazaar is aimed at children and youth, it draws people of all ages. It's a fantastic community event. The games are creative and fun. My family's favourite was the nose-picking game where you reached into a cardboard nose with slime inside to get a points token. Thank you to Valerie's family, friends, and volunteers for such a fun-filled day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

BLUENOSE GOLF CLUB: 90TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I rise today to recognize the 90th anniversary of the Bluenose Golf Club. For 90 eventful years, the Kaulbach family has kindly allowed the club to use one of the most beautiful pieces of real estate in our province, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. Golfers are treated to the "money shot" as they move through the course overlooking Lunenburg's historic waterfront or dine at the clubhouse restaurant.

In July, I had the pleasure of meeting Ron and Shelly Kaulbach to thank them for providing this wonderful asset to Nova Scotia. Please join me today in congratulating the Bluenose Golf Club on this exciting milestone.

THE SPEAKER: Order. We will now begin Oral Questions Put By Members to Ministers. The time is now 2:00 p.m. and we will finish at 2:50 p.m.

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

[2:00 p.m.]

PREM.: HEALTH CARE IDEAS RAFFLE - EXPLAIN

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: The Premier was elected on a promise to fix health care. He told Nova Scotians that he had the solutions. Two years into his mandate - halfway through - he's clearly run out of them, because now he's turned health care policy development into a game show - a raffle - where he's going to pay Nova Scotians up to \$1,000 if they give him the ideas. Does the Premier really think that the best way to build health care policy and solutions in this province is to turn that process into a game show? Does he think that that might just create a bit more *Jeopardy* in the system?

THE PREMIER: Speaker, listen. I'm incredibly proud of the work that's being done in health care. We have moved the needle tremendously. There's work to be done, there's no question about that. I certainly can understand. We lived through the member's government for eight years, where they didn't listen to a single Nova Scotian on a single thing. I can understand the member being surprised that we would reach out to Nova Scotians.

Time and time again, he asks in this Chamber, Who we are listening to?, Who are we talking to? The reason we listen to Nova Scotians is because I believe - although it's not always evident in this Chamber - that there are a lot of brilliant Nova Scotians and they want to have their say on this province.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I'm sorry, Speaker, but the Premier and the minister have been bragging every single day in this House that they've done all the consultation with unions and health care workers. They're the only government to ever get out and talk to people. Were none of those ideas good enough to bring forward that the government has to bring in a raffle prize to try to get good ideas right now?

The Premier's right: The needle has moved. We've got more than twice as many people without a family doctor. We've got wait-times increasing to see specialists and surgeons. We've got off-load wait-times that have nearly tripled at some of our emergency rooms and more people dying in hospital.

The Premier has said, "We want ideas, they just can't cost anything." Does he really think that the price is right on that?

THE PREMIER: I just want to clarify the record. The member said that I've said we've done all the consulting. I want to be clear with Nova Scotians: As long as we're in government, we will always consult, and we will always listen. I'd like to table an interesting . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order. Please don't make me have to keep looking over. I've given a lot of chances without saying anything. We're early into Question Period. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Speaker. I'd just like to table an interesting article that I read this morning. It's titled "The little province that could—and did": "Tiny Nova Scotia is leading the world in pharmacy innovation right now. By planning with care for the future," we are getting things done.

I'll just finish with saying to the member: Nurses, doctors, health care administration, those are all organizations to which we said, "You got a deal." They're ones that their government said no deal to.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Again, patting themselves on the back, laying blame on others, while more people don't have a family doctor, while more people can't access the emergency health care they need, while more people wait to see a surgeon or a specialist, while people don't get the preventive care that can save their lives. This is what we get from the Premier: a raffle competition to get new ideas, because the Premier's run out of them.

The Premier's offering a potential \$1,000 to one of these individuals to give good ideas. Did he forget that Nova Scotians are actually paying him \$200,000 a year to solve these health care problems?

THE PREMIER: It's really incredible the progress that's been made on the health care file in this province. The members opposite - and the former Minister of Health and Wellness, I might add - might not notice the progress, but it's being noticed nationally.

The people working on the front lines of health care, they know that this government supports them. They know that this government is moving the needle. They know that this government is innovative and will always listen. We will listen every single day.

Just overnight we received, I think, over 200 suggestions from people working in health care of small, little changes. We're happy to make them. That member - the former Minister of Health and Wellness - had all kinds of time to listen. He just didn't have any time for Nova Scotians.

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

PREM.: PHARMACARE FEES: WAIVE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: My question is also for the Premier. For many months, our caucus has been urging the Premier to waive Pharmacare fees for families and seniors, so that they have a shot at affording groceries and their medication. There's an idea. Those fees are administered by a private company, Medavie. Even though this government says they're going to do whatever it takes to fix health care, they haven't imposed any penalties or fines on Medavie's subsidiary, EMCI, when they breach components of their contract to provide ground ambulance services, and things continue to worsen.

Is the Premier protecting Nova Scotians, or Medavie's profit line?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: There's no question there are issues with EHS and the ambulance service here. Of course, we're proud of the improvements we're trying to make with the fixed wing. Lots of people are benefiting from that fixed wing service, and many other innovations we've come up with along the way. I will just assure the member there's only one thing that drives me every morning when I get out of bed, and that's to look after Nova Scotians. I'm focused on that. We don't get everything perfect, but we are always coming from a place right here to put Nova Scotians first.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Telus is another big corporation that's making big business out of private health care in Canada, including here in Nova Scotia, where they run virtual health services for profit, funded by the public purse. Why won't the Premier find a way to hire more health care professionals to provide public services, instead of paying corporations like Telus to do it for them?

THE PREMIER: We're only concerned with access to care for Nova Scotians. We make sure - I believe in the public system. I'm a supporter of the public system. Nova Scotians have access to public health care. We have no intentions of privatizing health care in this province. That's a narrative that the NDP will sometimes push. I just want to assure Nova Scotians - not going to happen, but making sure Nova Scotians have access is what will happen. That's what we're doing, and if it means working with private companies to make sure that people can get the care, we'll make sure they do that, too.

I know lots of Nova Scotians who got their vaccine at a pharmacy. You know what, Speaker? They didn't complain to me that they went to a pharmacy. They said they're happy they got their vaccine. We will work with those to make (inaudible). (Applause)

CLAUDIA CHENDER: It's clear that health care is getting worse. Nova Scotians are choosing between food and medicine, waiting hours in emergency rooms, and not knowing if an ambulance will arrive when they call. What does the Premier do? He heads, literally, to an office tower on Bay Street to talk about "innovation" in health care at a

\$1,000-a-table event sponsored by Medavie and Telus. Meanwhile, the Premier says he will pay \$1,000 - same cost as a table - for health care ideas, as long as they don't cost us anything. Will the Premier stop scheming with corporations and get to work fixing our public system?

THE PREMIER: I want to assure Nova Scotians that progress is being made on health care. Every single day in this province, people can access virtual care. Every single day in this province, people can access care at a pharmacy, and I'll table that article again about the little province that could: "Tiny Nova Scotia is leading the world in pharmacy innovation right now."

Every single day in this province, people are accessing care through unique avenues under the direction of the Minister of Health and Wellness, who is getting to work putting Nova Scotians at the forefront. I'm going to host all the Premiers here in Halifax in a couple of weeks to talk about health care innovation. I will listen to anyone who wants to talk about health care, and I will talk to anyone who wants to talk about health care, because the only thing that matters is access to care for Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

DHW: ACCESS TO CARE - EXPLAIN

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I think if we read between the lines of the Premier's comments, we see what one of the issues is here when it comes to health care. There seems to be more care about what people are saying about the government - what the headlines are - and less care and appreciation for the outcomes that are getting worse and worse by the week in our health care system.

You want to talk about access to care? Talk to patients who are showing up in their emergency rooms who can't see a doctor for hours at a time. Talk to the patient who's stuck on the ambulance for hours at a time and can't get into the emergency room. Talk to members in this House who sat in emergency rooms with stroke symptoms, who couldn't even see a nurse practitioner. Talk to those people who are being failed every single day. Talk to the family members who are seeing increased death rates in hospital. Talk to the staff who have to call in firefighters to do CPR because they don't have the staff.

Will the Premier stop patting himself on the back, care less about the headlines, and actually start caring about the outcomes that Nova Scotians are experiencing?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Indeed, Speaker, I'm actually not surprised to hear that there's minimization on the other side of the House about hearing from health care providers directly. I certainly experienced that. Here's a little campaign tip: I hope that the campaign team is watching, because that's what resonated with Nova Scotians. Our Action for Health Care plan is built on the voices of Nova Scotians. We travelled this

province, talking to communities, in 22 communities. Now we're going back to health care workers to ask what they want, and over 200 responded in less than 24 hours. That is the problem with the former government. As I've said 100 times on this floor, the reason I'm here is because they just wouldn't listen.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Again, Speaker, an obsession with laying blame on past governments, past ministers. I was minister for five months in health care, and how long has the government been in place? Over two years. If only the government . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. Please, everyone. Go ahead.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

ZACH CHURCHILL: In five months, we expanded cancer care, we fought off the Delta wave, we kept the doctors wait-list at less than 70,000 people. Off-load wait times were a fraction of what they are now. If only the government was less obsessed with those five months and more obsessed about the four years that they have power to change direction in health care, I think we'd actually be getting somewhere.

Can the Premier please tell this House why he cares more about my five months as Minister of Health and Wellness than he does about his four years as Premier of the Province?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: I can assure the member opposite that I don't care one bit about his five months as Health Minister in this province. What I would like to talk about is the 50,000 more primary care visits per month; 15 primary care clinics across this province that are delivering in-patient care with Virtual Care Nova Scotia; 69,000 virtual care registrations; 52,000 Nova Scotia senior and primary care clinics; 2,000 patients attached since July 1st through the Primary Care Physician Incentive Program; 35 requests from the primary care stabilization team, preventing 14,000 people from going on the list; a third endoscopy suite at the Dartmouth General Hospital, with an additional 125 screenings going on per month; Halifax Vision expanded partnerships, a 64 per cent increase.

I have so many more stats. I can't wait for the next question.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

MAH: HRM COUNCIL TREATMENT - DEFEND

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We've watched with awe in this House as the government has run roughshod over HRM. I do want to bring the attention of the House back to a quote of November 16, 2021. At an East Hants council meeting the Minister of Justice said, and I quote: "The Premier does recognize the importance of non-HRM

ridings, totally politically, but we don't do very well in HRM. We do very well in the outskirts and other places in the province." We're seeing the minister's comments actually play out in how this government is treating the largest municipal unit in the province.

I'd like to ask the Premier if he stands by this quote and if it's politics that are driving his decision to make these decisions to run roughshod over Halifax city council.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, I can't tell you how disappointed I am to hear that type of invective brought up. Here's the reality: We are serving every Nova Scotian. We care about every Nova Scotian. We care about every homeless Nova Scotian. We care about every Nova Scotian needing health care. We are working hard. We are a government of action. We witnessed eight years of inaction. That's the reality of deferred maintenance - of things not done. We have been working hard on every front in that time to address all these problems, both for HRM citizens and every citizen in Nova Scotia matters to us.

[2:15 p.m.]

ZACH CHURCHILL: We've seen this government do the same thing that Doug Ford did, which is gutting him to scandal, an RCMP investigation, an AG investigation by running roughshod over local decision-makers. We've seen Premier Ford's efforts to stamp on Toronto city council. I think they are taking action, but it's based on the wrong role model, I believe, for the situation at hand.

I do think we need clarity on this quote. I do not think that the Minister of Justice said this on his own. He said it because he heard about it. He referenced the Premier in it. Politically, they care about areas outside of HRM.

I'd like to get clarification from the Minister of Justice on this quote: Where did he hear it, where did it come from, and why did he say it?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, through you to the Leader of the Official Opposition, my assumption is, considering that you said that I said it at the East Hants council meeting, I would therefore think that there would be minutes that would be associated. I'd like the leader to table the minutes so that I can read them, and then I certainly will make a comment after that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

DOJ: DESMOND FATALITY INQUIRY REPORT - UPDATE

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thanks, Speaker, and the leader has already tabled that.

In July, the Attorney General fired the judge who was overseeing the Desmond Fatality Inquiry because the Premier said that his report was taking too long to complete,

and it wasn't clear that a report was forthcoming. However, Judge Zimmer told the Inquiry lawyers that not only was a report forthcoming, but the report was expected to be complete in August 2023. I'll table that.

Judge Zimmer told the Attorney General via a June 30th letter that the report would be complete by August, so the Attorney General was aware of the timelines. Did the Attorney General fail to inform the Premier that the report was due in only a few weeks, or did the Premier intentionally leave that information out when he told Nova Scotians that he didn't know when or if a report was forthcoming?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I would remind members that Judge Zimmer - retirement age for judges within the Province of Nova Scotia is 70. They can be extended to 75 to work on a part-time basis. Judge Zimmer was extended three times after his 75th birthday, after three times telling me that the report was imminently coming. We felt that this was the best way to move forward to try to get justice and a resolution for the families.

KELLY REGAN: Well, that's a new wrinkle, because the reason given for firing Judge Zimmer from the inquiry was that his report was taking too long to complete, despite the fact that the judge told the minister that he would be done in August 2023. We are now in October, two months after Judge Zimmer's report would have been delivered to the government. Can the minister update this House on how long it's going to be before Judge Scovil's report will be completed?

BRAD JOHNS: I would highlight that Judge Zimmer was not fired. His term was not renewed, after being renewed three times. We felt that it was the best way to look at going with somebody else - the most expedient way to get justice for the families. I have not had an update from Judge Scovil on the work. I would say that this report, as with others, is typically at arm's length from government. We'll wait and see how he comes.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

EECD: VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS - ADDRESS

SUZY HANSEN: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. A video recorded late last week depicts a frightening incident of violence in a Bedford junior high school. Charles P. Allen High, Malcolm Munroe Memorial Middle School, Avon View High School, and now Rocky Lake Junior High: The violent incidents at these schools represent just a fraction of the many thousands in the past year. Teachers have been clear that they need this government to develop a plan to address violence in schools. Will the minister commit to doing this?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: This is a really important issue. Violence is not acceptable. Students and staff deserve learning environments that are safe - not only that are safe, but where they feel safe. Events like the ones that the member opposite referenced

are scary, and can absolutely be troubling, not only to the people involved but to families and communities as well. The reality is that we do not live in a bubble, and neither do our schools exist in a bubble. Issues that exist in community make their way into schools. For that reason, it is incredibly important that our schools are prepared, and our educational system and our educators are prepared, to address those issues. We have many, many mechanisms in place that do exactly that.

SUZY HANSEN: I didn't get an answer to that. Teachers, students, and families are telling us that school violence is a growing issue of concern, something that this minister has continued to downplay. When I asked last week about rising rates of violence, the minister stated that rates of incidents have remained stable and that any increase was due to COVID-19 and enrolment increases despite what the actual facts show. How then does the minister explain a 23 per cent increase in school violence since 2017 despite an only 8.5 per cent increase in student enrolment?

BECKY DRUHAN: There are mathematical explanations for the question that the member opposite had raised, but I don't want to get into that because, quite frankly, I absolutely do not minimize the severity of violence, and it doesn't matter whether rates are increasing or decreasing: The reality is violence is not acceptable and we don't accept it.

For that reason, in addition to the things that already exist in schools, which are mechanisms to ensure that educators and staff build strong relationships to their students - the code of conduct that is in place to support educators and staff in responding when incidents happen, and other mechanisms that we have in place - I have directed the department to do a number of things to improve safety. I have directed the department to review the code of conduct. We've added inclusive education positions, and we are continuing to work with our colleagues, including at NSTU to make sure our schools are safe spaces.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

DOJ: COURT RESOURCES SHORTAGE - ADDRESS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Speaker, the Jordan's Principle results from a Supreme Court decision that requires the government to deal with cases in provincial and youth court within 18 months or within 30 months in courts such as the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. In August, CBC reported the number of criminal cases tossed out by judges due to violations of the Jordan's Principle is at an all-time high. I'll table that. As of July 31st, 12 cases had been stayed by judges because they took too long - nearly double the total for the entire year in 2022.

Rick Woodburn, the President of the Canadian Association of Crown Counsel, told CBC that the delays were caused by a historical lack of resources. At the time, the minister

said that no one wants to see this happen. Can the minister tell us what steps he has taken to address this critical shortage of resources within our province's courts?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: We certainly understand the impact of delays on families. Because of Jordan's Principle, we have been trying to deal with those. We currently have a full bench. We have just recently appointed two new judges to the bench. We continue to work with PPS to look at getting more Crown prosecutors, and we are actually looking for additional Crowns for our sexual assault violence team as well as a number of other teams. We continue to work to try to move forward and get cases through as quickly as we can.

KELLY REGAN: These are serious criminal cases. Due to the historic shortage of resources within our court system, one of the cases that was dismissed this year involved a violent sexual assault on a five-year-old child - a five-year-old child. How many other cases are at risk of being dismissed because of this government's lack of leadership? You can't just look at hiring some more prosecutors - you actually have to do it.

BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, through you to the honourable member, we are under way hiring people across all levels of the courts, and we will continue to do that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

DOJ: FOIPOP ACT - AMEND

HON. TONY INCE: Speaker, this government pledged that they would be more open and transparent when they were running for election. The minister's own mandate letter directs him to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to give the Privacy Commissioner more powers within 90 days of taking office; a promise that is almost 700 days overdue.

In their open letter, the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute says that this government denied the Freedom of Information request they sent on an independent review of human resources practices within the Public Prosecution Services.

Will the minister pledge to provide the information that the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute - an institute that his own department funds to help rule out institutional racism and he ought to listen to - will the minister please provide the information that the organization is requesting?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, through you to the honourable member, I would suggest that that report was done through the Public Prosecution Services, and the best way to probably access that is to ask them.

TONY INCE: In collaboration with the DOJ and ANSA, there was supposed to be a plan released in 2023 that will also help address Recommendation 4.17 in the *Halifax*,

Nova Scotia: Street Checks Report, which calls for government to address racial bias and other parts of the criminal justice system beyond street checks. Again, this government has promised multiple strategies and plans that have not come to fruition. We are now 10 months into the year. No plan or updates. Will the Minister please release the plan?

BRAD JOHNS: Once the plan is completed, we will look at having it released at that time.

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

DOJ: NDA POLICY - CHANGE

LORELEI NICOLL: The Minister of Justice decided, or was directed by someone, to refuse to change the laws around non-disclosure agreements for sexual assault victims. These agreements are often used by men who are in positions of power to restrict the rights of women. Experts in the field, and victims, are demanding action, but this government is stuck in reverse when it comes to the rights of sexual assault and sexual harassment victims. Can the Minister of Justice tell this House which experts in sexual assault the government consulted with before they decided to re-traumatize victims with their non-action on NDAs?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: As I said earlier, we've looked at jurisdictional scans, everything else. We're not moving forward with NDAs.

LORELEI NICOLL: Victims of sexual assault are often coerced into signing non-disclosure agreements when they have been victimized and are not given time to truly consider their options. Often the NDAs have punitive penalty clauses. In other words, they include what the victim would have to pay her abuser should she ever decide to tell her story. These penalty clauses are often multiple times what the victim receives in a settlement, meaning that if the victim has a change of heart and wants to be free of the agreement, they can't simply repay what they were given. They have to accept financial ruin. Will the Minister at least consider prohibiting penalty clauses that bankrupt victims of sexual assault in the NDAs that this government allows to continue?

BRAD JOHNS: Of course, supporting survivors with sensitivity is important to this government. As I said before, we have looked at a number of ways across other jurisdictions. We're not moving forward with NDAs at this time. I would like to point out that currently the victims do have choices as to whether they enter into an NDA, and we're not going to look away at limiting or taking away options or choices from anyone.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

SLTC: SENIORS POVERTY - ADDRESS

GARY BURRILL: My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Long-term Care. I'd like to table page 117 of the recent Canada food bank report, which lays out how seniors poverty in Nova Scotia is the worst of any province in the country. I'd also like to table a jurisdictional scan from the Legislative Library of seniors' income benefits across Canada showing that Nova Scotia is one of only two Canadian jurisdictions that doesn't have a program directly supplementing the Guaranteed Income Supplement of low-income seniors beyond reimbursing certain defined expenses. Isn't something wrong somewhere when the province that has the worst problem with seniors' poverty is doing the least in terms of direct cash payments to address it?

[2:30 p.m.]

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Food insecurity, housing - these are all struggles that all Nova Scotians are seeing as a challenge for our province. That's why there are targeted benefits aimed at the most vulnerable Nova Scotians. The Seniors Care Grant, which we brought in - one of the first actions that our government did - is now \$750 for Nova Scotians. We have the Property Tax Rebate for Seniors. We have the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. Our government is refunding the HST for those most vulnerable Nova Scotians who paid into income tax last year. There are targeted benefits we are looking at, and we're going to continue to look at other opportunities.

GARY BURRILL: What the minister is failing to consider is that, with the Seniors Care Grant, the senior has to have the expenses in the certain defined area, has to get the receipts - file and hang on to \$750 worth of receipts - has to get the application form, fill it out, and then submit it. With other provinces with seniors income supplementing programs, the cheque is in the mail on the basis of your last year's income tax return. Don't Nova Scotia seniors deserve a provincial government supplement to GIS as is received by seniors elsewhere in the country?

BARBARA ADAMS: As all the members would know, our province was the very first to make a minister dedicated entirely to the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care. In addition to the Seniors Care Grant, which was the first in the country as well, there are several other programs that we offer that are also firsts: the CAPABLE program will soon be the first in the country to be offered here in Nova Scotia, as well as expanding the CORAH program. We've also given huge increases to the Canadian Red Cross Health Equipment Loan Program. We are building 34 nursing homes in the province of Nova Scotia, and we are expanding the health care and home care in our province in an unprecedented way. There are a lot of things we are doing for the province of Nova Scotia's seniors, and we will continue to do more.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

DOJ: NON-HRM RIDINGS COMMENTS - CLARIFY

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I've tabled the Minister of Justice's comments. I have tabled a link to the YouTube video in which any member or member of the public can watch those comments. I'll repeat them to the House: "The Premier does recognize the importance of non-HRM ridings totally politically, but we don't do very well in HRM. We do very well on the outskirts and other places in the province."

I think of the government's actions to cut the family doctor incentive only in Halifax. I think of the government's treatment of the mayor, council, and elected leaders of HRM. I'm worried about this. I think this quote needs some clarification for the House. It's clear this information came from the Premier. He's been the one who's recognized as understanding the importance of non-HRM ridings. I want to give the minister a chance to clarify these comments to the Legislature.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I guess what I would say to the Official Leader of the Official Opposition is this: If you would like to give me an opportunity to clarify comments to the House, provide me with an opportunity to go see what he tabled, watch the video, and then I can come back and answer questions. I don't know what he's talking about until I look at it.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Certainly, we'll be patient, but not too patient, in giving the minister time to review the documents that are tabled. I do want to say I'm concerned that this is indicative of the culture of decision-making in this government, where if you're with us, you're with us. If you're a friend and an ally, you get rewarded. If you're not, you're blocked out and we don't care what you have to say.

We've seen examples of this. We see it here in HRM. We've seen it with CBRM. We've heard of municipal leaders, public servants, and consultants get . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. Going back and listening to what the question and what this theme of questions are, it really is political and is not a question for the House or, in fact, a question for the Minister of Justice. You did table a link but nothing that can be viewed, so I'm going to rule the question out of order, and we will proceed. There is no further question.

The Liberals with the next individual with a new question.

The honourable member for Bedford South.

DOJ: BOUNCERS BILL - PROCLAIM

BRAEDON CLARK: On Christmas Eve last year, Ryan Sawyer was found unresponsive after an altercation with a bouncer at a Halifax bar. At the hospital, his family

was told their son had no sign of brain activity and he would not live to see Christmas. His death since then has been ruled a homicide.

Under existing laws, bouncers can use a degree of force to remove a patron from the establishment, but it is up to the courts to determine what degree is acceptable. Ryan's tragic death has prompted his family and advocates to call for the province to regulate bouncers, adding an extra layer of accountability in hopes of preventing tragedies like this from happening again.

A bill that would give the province the authority to license bouncers was passed with all-party support in 2010 but has never been proclaimed. My question to the Minister of Justice is: Will his department proclaim this important piece of legislation?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Our hearts and minds certainly go out to the Sawyer family regarding this. I do know that the Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco Licensing Division of Service Nova Scotia has introduced new requirements for cabaret staff regarding training, criminal records checks, and conditions on their license. That's what we've done.

BRAEDON CLARK: I thank the minister for the response. Sujit Choudhry, a Toronto-based lawyer and constitutional law expert, suggests that writing off the bill passed in 2010 is unlawful, as it undermines the will of the Legislature.

This bill rightfully received all-party support 13 years ago, and the fact that it hasn't been proclaimed is not the fault of any one party. All three parties in this Chamber have formed government since this bill was passed in 2010. This government does have the ability now to do the right thing by proclaiming the law and providing comfort to Ryan's family and friends and ensuring that in the future this kind of tragedy does not happen again.

My question to the Minister of Justice is: Would he consider proclaiming this bill to make sure these kinds of circumstances do not take place anymore?

BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, through you to the members: 13 years ago was quite a long time. Things have changed since then - a lot has; 13 years ago, my oldest daughter was three, so a lot of things change in 13 years.

We did review the legislation that came forward. We can't really talk about why the NDP government at the time didn't proclaim it. What we can say is that we've reviewed it and we've decided to go through it through amendments with the Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco Division.

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

DOJ: JAIL STAFFING - INCREASE

LORELEI NICOLL: My question is for the Minister of Justice. In August 2023, the union representing correctional officers told media that staffing levels at the jail are the worst in its history. Inmates have been regularly locked down because of low staffing levels - not because of any disciplinary matter. The judges have been taking notice. I'll table that.

Justice Brothers wrote in the July decision that the judiciary's patience is running out, and if effective measures to hire and retain staff are not undertaken, the court may soon start taking action to alleviate the problem themselves. I'll table that.

My question to the minister is: What steps has the Justice Minister taken to ensure that effective measures to hire and retain staff are under way, or has the minister allowed the staffing shortage to continue?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Thank you very much, Speaker, on Minister of Justice Day today. I thank the colleague across the floor for the question. What I would say is like just about every other field in this province right now, corrections, of course is having recruiting challenges on their own. We continue to hold recruiting drives as well as training those who come on.

We are aware of the issues and we continue to try to address those as well.

LORELEI NICOLL: Justice is a daily requirement. Back in July, the Justice Department issued a statement: "While recruitment is an ongoing process, we are working on other workforce initiatives to help improve staffing in our correctional facilities. This work is a priority for the department." Have these priority workforce initiatives been successful in eliminating the staffing shortages at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, or is this another failed solution of this government?

BRAD JOHNS: We continue to do the recruitment. We continue to do training. One thing I would point out for members is one of the challenges that we have, of course, is people actually attending. We have a number of people who are off on long-term sick leave. Those positions we're trying to fill as well, so we'll continue to move forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DHW: WEEKLY AMBULANCE REPORTS - COMMIT

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. Every day in this province, ambulances and patients are tied up, waiting dangerously long times, to be off-loaded at the hospital. On a recent Tuesday evening, I was told that 17 paramedics were at the QEII waiting to off-load patients. In her report on this issue, the

Auditor General said, “We recommend the Department of Health and Wellness publicly report weekly ground ambulance response times by community and offload times by hospital.” I can table that. Presumably the minister has this information. Will she commit to reporting it weekly?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly we are very committed to be a transparent government that reports on a variety of metrics, and I would point the member opposite to Action for Health. On a regular basis, not always weekly, but on a monthly or quarterly basis - sometimes annually, depending on the metric - we do post information there so that Nova Scotians can see how the system is performing.

Not always are those the best outcomes that we'd like, and those are the places where we focus the most, so I would say that we are very transparent. We are very committed to being transparent with Nova Scotians. We continue to work with the provider as well as the Nova Scotia Health Authority around off-load times as well as other metrics. I would point the member to the Action for Health website.

SUSAN LEBLANC: The current standard says that an ambulance that arrives at an emergency room should be able off-load the patient in 30 minutes or less. The government's most recent public data show that for the week of October 1st, in the Western Zone, the average off-load time was 88 minutes. In the Northern Zone, it was 92 minutes. In the Central Zone, it was 139 minutes, and in the Eastern Zone, it was a 150-minute average - an average wait for the patient to be off-loaded into the emergency department and the paramedic to get back on the road which is five times longer than the standard. But when it comes to what is happening at each individual hospital, people are left in the dark. So why is the government hiding this data?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, there is no attempt to hide any information at all whatsoever. We're not trying to hide it at all. In fact, we're the first government that has an Action for Health website that actually shows the data for what's happening in the health care system. What happened is we're working very hard across this province. We have a number of places where the off-load times are meeting standards.

We look at places like the Aberdeen Hospital, we look at St. Martha's Regional Hospital, and we look at all of these hospitals and we take what's happening there, and we scale it as best we can. There is nobody taking their foot off the gas in terms of response time. We are under-bedded in this province, in long-term care and in the hospitals, and have been for decades. We also need to increase staffing. So there's a ton of work that's happening around off-load times.

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

DOJ: BACK PAYMENTS OWED - INFORM

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Our previous government made reforms to the Maintenance Enforcement Program a priority. In 2018, there were approximately \$63 million in outstanding arrears owed to the children in this province from payers. Thanks to the reforms brought in by our government, the amount of arrears owed was reduced to \$52 million by 2021. My question for the Minister of Justice is: Can the minister tell the House the amount of back payments that are owed to children in this province today?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I don't have those numbers offhand. I can certainly get them for the member. What I will say is that the department's been working very hard to try to ensure that arrears are caught up. We've entered into a number of MOUs with other provinces, and we're looking at ways to get those arrears to the people who need them - the families, the children, and the spouses that need those.

[2:45 p.m.]

PATRICIA ARAB: I appreciate the answer from the minister and I look forward to seeing those numbers. Given that this has been a priority, and the government knows how imperative it is to make the amounts owed to children right, I'm curious if the minister has an expected timeline for this to happen.

BRAD JOHNS: I would say that there is not a timeline. I would say that this is an ongoing thing. We are always looking at efficiencies, trying to ensure that we get monies to the people who need them - the families that need them. As I said, we've just entered into an MOU with Ontario, and we are continuing to look at ways here within the province to get those monies to the families.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

DOJ: CORRECTIONS VACANCY RATE - INFORM

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: We know that those who work in correctional facilities work extremely hard jobs that can cause both physical and mental harm to staff. We know that we are in desperate need of more officers in our jails, but we can't recruit and retain more of them. I would like to ask the minister: What is the current vacancy rate for correctional officers in our jails across the province?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Once again, to get the exact percentage I would have to find out. What I would offer is, as I said previously, those numbers do fluctuate from day to day, time to time. A lot of that has to do with sick leave or long-term leave but I will certainly try to get those - what the average vacancy rate is - for the member.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Speaker, those who are currently working in our jails need more support and are working completely under-staffed in very difficult conditions for both them and those in the jails. I would like to ask the minister: What is this government doing to retain the current officers we have and what is he doing to recruit more officers to alleviate the stress on our current staff?

BRAD JOHNS: As I said on a previous question, we do recruiting drives on a regular basis. As with almost every other profession, I think, that I know of, unfortunately or fortunately, whichever way you look at it, Nova Scotia has a lot of job vacancies across many things and corrections isn't unique to that.

What I would offer to any member in this House is that if they have somebody who they feel wants to work, wants to become a correctional officer, a security officer, a police officer, or sheriff or anything else with Corrections, please bring them to my attention because we are constantly looking for and holding training sessions. We'd love to be able to find people out there who want to work in these jobs. These are great-paying jobs, Speaker, that are really good jobs and we'd love to get Nova Scotians into them.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

DOJ: OVERUSE OF REMAND - EXPLAIN

HON. KEITH IRVING: Let's talk remand. An extensive report by the East Coast Prison Justice Society found, among other issues, that Nova Scotia is making extensive use of the practice of remand. Remand is putting people in jail who are awaiting trial and who have not been found guilty of any crime. People can be held on remand for a number of issues that have nothing to do with them being dangerous to society or reoffending. It could be that the offender doesn't have the resources to post bail, for example.

This report found that in 2021-22, 76 per cent of inmates in Nova Scotia jails were on remand. I would like to ask the minister: What measures is his department taking to reduce this overuse of remand?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: We are in discussions with the courts. Of course, the judiciary is aware that this is an issue and they are looking at it. I would point out that we do have a new chief judge in the province of Nova Scotia and I'm sure that he is aware of it as well - Chief Judge Borden. We will certainly make sure that they're aware of it as well.

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I rise on a point of order for clarification. A line of questioning was shut down today because - I believe I heard you say that it was deemed political.

I do have to remind the House that we are seeing partisan communication coming out of government offices with taxpayer-funded resources, and I find it a bit odd that we can't ask political questions in this House. We've got a government whose departments are sending out partisan communications - it happened recently, through the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We can't even put parties' names on newsletters to our constituencies, and now we've got a Speaker telling us that we can't ask political questions in the House. I do require some clarification on your ruling, please.

THE SPEAKER: If I wasn't clear earlier, basically, first of all, I certainly don't mind explaining again, but you are challenging the Speaker on a ruling that was made. I will indicate to you that your line, your theme of questioning, had nothing to do with the minister's portfolio. Every question that is put forth here in this Chamber is to do with the administration of government and their portfolios. I hope that brings you clarification.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

We are going to take a short recess while we resolve ourselves into a Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[2:52 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills.]

[5:21 p.m. The CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Danielle Barkhouse resumed the Chair.]

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

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

Bill No. 321 - Conseil scolaire acadien provincial Act

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

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, pursuant to Rule No. 5(c), I move that the time for adjournment for the House tomorrow, October 25th, be not 5:30 p.m. but 11:59 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the orders be extended tomorrow to 11:59 p.m.

Shall the motion carry?

THE SPEAKER: Order. There has been a request for a recorded vote.

Ring the bells. Call in the members.

[5:24 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

THE SPEAKER: Order. Are the Whips satisfied?

I now call on the Clerk to conduct the vote.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[6:23 p.m.]

YEAS

Hon. Brad Johns
Hon. Tory Rushton
Hon. Barbara Adams
Hon. Kim Masland
Hon. Allan MacMaster
Hon. Twila Grosse
Hon. Michelle Thompson
Hon. John Lohr
Hon. Timothy Halman
Hon. Kent Smith
Dave Ritcey
Hon. Brian Wong
Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek
Hon. Brian Comer
Hon. Colton LeBlanc

NAYS

Hon. Patricia Arab
Hon. Zach Churchill
Susan Leblanc
Kendra Coombes
Suzy Hansen
Gary Burrill
Lisa Lachance
Hon. Tony Ince
Lorelei Nicoll
Hon. Ben Jessome
Braedon Clark
Ali Duale
Ronnie LeBlanc
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
Lisa Lachance

Hon. Jill Balsler
Hon. Pat Dunn
Hon. Greg Morrow
Hon. Becky Druhan
Larry Harrison
John White
John A. MacDonald
Hon. Keith Bain
Chris Palmer
Melissa Sheehy-Richard
Tom Taggart
Nolan Young
Hon. Steve Craig

Hon. Tony Ince
Lorelei Nicoll
Hon. Ben Jessome
Braedon Clark
Ali Duale
Ronnie LeBlanc
Elizabeth McCrossin

THE CLERK: For, 28. Against, 14.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: 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: The motion is carried.

We will have a short recess while the committee sets up.

[6:27 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Lisa Lachance in the Chair.]

[12:02 a.m. The CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Lisa Lachance resumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: Order. The Committee of the Whole House on Bills has met and will now report. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

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

Bill No. 327 - Motor Vehicle Act (amended).

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

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

We have now reached past the hour of adjournment. Thus the House is adjourned until 1:00 p.m. today (laughter) - from 1:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.

We are adjourned.

[The House rose at 12:03 a.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 728**

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas the MacDonald Memorial Legion Branch No. 156 is a grassroots organization that has its greatest impact through volunteer activities and understands the importance of honouring past sacrifices and acknowledging the courage of those who served and still serve today; and

Whereas the Legion is there to serve military and RCMP members and their families to promote Remembrance Day ceremonies, the Poppy Campaign, and to serve our communities and the country; and

Whereas the Legion is a central place for people to gather and feel connected to their neighbours by serving as a community centre, hosting weddings, town hall meetings, community BBQs, memorial services, and other important events;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the current board members of branch No. 156 - Larry MacDonald, Larry Marriott, Claude Fraser, Cathy McCulloch, Mary Marriott, David Smith, Mike Shea, and Marg Shea - for the important community work they do to support local veterans, help seniors, and offer a place to gather and have fun.

RESOLUTION NO. 729

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Kevin Dunbar, a home brewer in Timberlea, teamed up with North Brewing Company to create a brew titled Trails to Ales as a fundraiser to support the maintenance and repair of the BLT Trails after considerable damage occurred from the mid-summer floods; and

Whereas in August, a weekend was dedicated to donating 15 per cent of draught sales in Timberlea to the BLT Trail Association, 1,800 cans of Trails to Ales were sold, with 50 cents of each can going to a fundraiser for the BLT Trail; and

Whereas the beer is lively, light, and a refreshing treat after a run, walk, or bike ride on the trails and the Trails to Ales beer sold out in two weeks, raising \$1,140 for the BLT Trails Association;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me thanking Kevin Dunbar and the North Brewing Company in Timberlea for their generosity to help support the restoration of the BLT Trail.

RESOLUTION NO. 730

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Linda Mosher of Bayside, Nova Scotia worked for 25 years at the Nova Scotia Chief Medical Examiner's Office, retiring in 2008 as manager and publishing a book, *Surrounded by Death and Bureaucrats*, as a memoir of interesting cases and colleagues; and

Whereas Mosher is a gifted storyteller whose style is direct, compassionate, and humorous as she shares in her book frustrating and funny government red tape stories along with sad and surprising details about cases she worked on over the years; and

Whereas Mosher's most complex case within the Medical Examiner's Office was the Swissair disaster on September 2, 1998, a plane crash that happened minutes away from her home and a night she recalls hearing the plane flying over her home and sounding low and rough;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in both thanking and congratulating Linda for her compassion to help others and her work as an essential service provider within government.

RESOLUTION NO. 731

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Since January of 2023, the Prospect Slammers have been involved in a project to promote pickleball in our community and encourage new players to get off the

couch and come and try pickleball; and

Whereas the Prospect Slammers have welcomed over 200 new people to try the sport and have organized open houses, tournaments, play and lunch, drop-in events, and given away free passes; and

Whereas the Slammers applied for (and received) a grant from the Prospect Road Community Centre to purchase balls, paddles, free passes, and nets to loan to people who wanted to try playing, and according to Wayne Paddock, who heads this group, “You know players are committed when they buy their own paddle”;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the Prospect Slammers for their community work to introduce and teach community members to play pickleball and for encouraging and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Their work is simply good for the sport and good for the community and good for the Slammers to have new people to play with.

RESOLUTION NO. 732

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Shaw's Landing has a long and celebrated history in the beautiful and active lobster fishing village in West Dover; and

Whereas the founding name comes from Mr. Ian Shaw, who originally came to Nova Scotia after tragically losing his daughter in 1998 when Swissair Flight 111 went down off the coast of Peggy's Cove and ran Shaw's Landing as a full-service restaurant; and

Whereas the current owners, Karen and Rob MacQuarrie, have continued Shaw's Landing as a small, locally owned, family restaurant sourcing local products and serving fresh authentic East Coast meals;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Karen and Rob for the hard work to run a successful family business.