



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

**DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

**Speaker: Honourable Karla MacFarlane**

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**First Session**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2023**

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House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2023**

**Sixty-fourth General Assembly**

**First Session**

**9:00 A.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Karla MacFarlane

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Lisa Lachance, Danielle Barkhouse, Nolan Young

THE SPEAKER: Order. Before I begin the daily routine, I am going to remove myself from the Chair and ask that the Deputy Speaker, the member for Shelburne, come forward and make a decision on a ruling of last week. I will remove myself from the Chair and allow the Deputy Speaker to come forward.

THE SPEAKER: I have the Speaker's Ruling on the point of order of whether Resolution No. 598 is in order. On Thursday, October 12, 2023, the honourable member for Cumberland North stood on a point of order to allege that Resolution No. 598 is out of order and it should be struck from the order paper.

Resolution No. 598 was received as a notice of motion on April 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year, and it first appeared on the order paper on April 5<sup>th</sup>. At the time the point of order was raised, it had been six sitting days since the notice of motion had been introduced and four sitting days since the resolution had been placed on the order paper.

The authorities are clear that a point of order must generally be raised at the moment a procedural irregularity occurs. This is noted in Bosc and Gagnon's *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at Page 637; and in *Beauchesne's Rules & Forms of the House of Commons of Canada*, sixth edition, at Pages 97 and 319.

While there are some exceptions to this, such as points of order arising out of a Question Period being dealt with not at the time they arise, but immediately after Question Period, even these exceptions underscore the importance of points of order being raised promptly to permit the irregularity to be cured and prevent any prejudice to the proceedings of this House.

The promptness requirement has been cited with approval on numerous occasions in this House. In the case of the notice of motion, the rulings of Speaker MacEwan are instructive. On April 10, 1996, he sustained a point of order raised in relation to a notice of motion immediately after oral notice was provided during the daily routine. In contrast, on April 2, 1996, he viewed the point of order raised on that day, Tuesday, as arriving too late in relation to the notice of motion that was given on the previous Friday and appeared on the order paper on Monday, the day before the point of order was raised.

In the later case, he ultimately confirmed his ruling to the narrow point that a point of order asked him to decide a question of law. Based on the authorities already cited, I rule that the point of order raised is too late to be considered.

While I am deciding this matter on the narrow ground of the failure to raise the point of order promptly, there are other aspects of this point of order that are problematic. The first ground of the point of order is actually, in substance, a question of privilege relating to an alleged breach of the honourable member's freedom of speech. However, a question of privilege cannot be piggybacked onto a point of order and, further, must also be brought at the earliest possible opportunity.

The other grounds of the point of order are based on characterization of Resolution 598 as a de facto motion for contempt. This characterization is not correct, as the motion does not purport to call for the honourable member to be found as having intentionally misled the House. Intentionally misleading the House is a contempt of the House. Misleading the House without any intention is merely a breach of order.

Lastly, ruling Resolution 598 out of order would negate the undoubted privilege of this House to control its own proceedings. As stated by then-Justice McLachlin of the Supreme Court of Canada in *New Brunswick Broadcasting Co. v. Nova Scotia (Speaker of the House of Assembly)*:

“The right of the House to be the sole judge of the lawfulness of its proceedings, is similarly evident; Erskine May states that this right is ‘fully established’. In

settling or departing from its own codes of procedure ‘the House can practically change or practically supersede the law.’”

Were the honourable member for Cumberland North’s point of order not out of time, it would still have to overcome these issues to be sustained. Without deciding the matter, the authorities indicate that she would be unsuccessful in this respect.

Accordingly, the point of order is dismissed.

THE SPEAKER: We will now begin the daily routine.

### **PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

TOM TAGGART: Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which reads:

“Whereas the Renewal of Aquaculture Licence AQ5001 will cause degradation to the environment especially of eel grass populations; damage the ability of communities of Seaforth and the surrounding areas to enjoy Causeway Beach; and prove scientifically and financially unviable;

“Therefore we, the undersigned residents of Seaforth, Grand Desert, Three Fathom Harbour, West Chezzetcook, Porters Lake, and the surrounding areas of The Head of Chezzetcook, call upon the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture to decline the renewal of Aquaculture Licence AQ5001.”

There are approximately 60 signatures on the petition, and I have affixed my signature to the petition as required by Rule 63(5).

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

### **PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

### **TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. KENT SMITH: Speaker, in response to a question that was raised yesterday during QP by the member for Clare, I’d like to table information that my department received from the Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board. The member raised concerns that there may be upwards of 140 constituents in arrears with the loan board. The information we received says there are only 35.

THE SPEAKER: The paper is tabled. Is there any further tabling of reports, regulations, and other papers?

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Speaker, before I read my Government Notice of Motion, I beg leave to make an introduction.

I'm honoured to introduce guests who are sitting in the Speaker's Gallery this morning. With us today is United States Consul General for Atlantic Canada Lyra Carr. (Applause) Consul General Carr assumed her position in July 2021, becoming only the second female consul general in the post's history.

As we recognize the Consul General, we think of our friends in Maine today. Our hearts go to our neighbours to the south who are going through unimaginable tragedy that, as Nova Scotians, we know too well. We certainly join Consul General Carr and all Americans as we pray for the families and community of Lewiston, Maine.

Nova Scotia places tremendous value on our relationship with the United States. I know all members will join me in telling Consul General Carr that we truly appreciate having her with us here in Nova Scotia. Thank you, Consul General Carr.

I don't want to leave out Gary. Accompanying her is Gary Logan, political and economic specialist. Maybe Gary can rise and receive the warm welcome of the House, as well. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 744**

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

Whereas in September 1833, the U.S. Consulate General Halifax was the first United States diplomatic presence and the first foreign consulate established in Canada, creating important connections between the United States and Nova Scotia; and

Whereas today, the U.S. Consulate General Halifax serves the four provinces of Atlantic Canada as well as the two small French islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon; and



Whereas we warmly congratulate the U.S. Consulate General Halifax on its 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary and its consistent work to promote economic, cultural, educational, and political cooperation between the United States and Atlantic Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature celebrate the 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. Consulate General Halifax.

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. (Standing ovation)

The honourable Premier.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 745**

THE PREMIER: I'll ask for a moment of silence after this Notice of Motion.

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

Whereas Nova Scotia and the United States are connected through family, culture, and an unwavering spirit of friendship; and

Whereas the senseless and tragic mass shooting that took place in Lewiston, Maine, leaves citizens in both our countries mourning the loss of life and those injured, and holding the families and survivors in our hearts; and

Whereas the shock and grief of this event can reopen deep and painful wounds for those who have experienced similar events - and unfortunately, our province is not immune to these feelings;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature stand with the people of Maine as they go through these very dark days.

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

[9:15 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We will now observe a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence of was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North on an introduction.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, today in your gallery, we have some special guests: some of the family members of a beloved and internationally renowned disability rights activist, Steven Estey. There's going to be a number of statements made about Steve today, and so before those begin, I would like to introduce his wife, Anne MacRae; his mother, Dolores Estey; and his sister, Jane Estey. They are all with us today. I would ask the House to welcome them warmly. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 746**

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

Whereas on September 11<sup>th</sup>, Nova Scotia lost an incredible advocate for people living with disabilities in Steve Estey; and

Whereas Steve spent decades as a voice for people living with disabilities, not just here in Nova Scotia but around the world, with his work with the United Nations and the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and

Whereas Steve's legacy lives on in how he changed lives with advancing human rights for people with disabilities, for which he received many awards and commendations;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House join me in honouring and remembering Steve Estey, someone whose unwavering commitment will greatly be missed.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 747**

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Madame la présidente, à une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que l'Ordre de la Nouvelle-Écosse est la plus haute distinction accordée par la province de la Nouvelle-Écosse aux personnes qui se sont particulièrement distinguées et qui ont apporté des contributions durables dans leurs domaines respectifs; et

Attendu que Phil Comeau est un réalisateur, producteur, et scénariste distingué qui a apporté des contributions extraordinaires et de longue date aux domaines des arts et à la communauté acadienne et francophone en plus d'être un détenteur du record Guinness pour le plus grand nombre de prix décernés à un court métrage documentaire pour son chef-d'œuvre, *Belle-Île en Acadie*; et

Attendu que M. Comeau est l'un des cinq récipiendaires de l'Ordre de la Nouvelle-Écosse en 2023;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour féliciter Phil Comeau d'être nommé membre de l'Ordre de la Nouvelle-Écosse et pour son engagement envers la préservation et la mise en valeur de la culture et du patrimoine acadien.

Madame la présidente, je demande l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débat.

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

Whereas the Order of Nova Scotia is the highest honour in the Province of Nova Scotia, recognizing people who have distinguished themselves and made lasting contributions in their field of interest; and

Whereas Phil Comeau is a distinguished director, producer and screenwriter who has made extraordinary and long-lasting contributions to the arts and to the Acadian and francophone community, as well as being recognized as a Guinness World Record holder for most awards won by a documentary short film for his chef-d'œuvre, *Belle-Île en Acadie*; and

Whereas Mr. Comeau is one of the five recipients receiving the Order of Nova Scotia in 2023;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Phil Comeau for receiving the Order of Nova Scotia, and for his commitment to the preservation and enhancement of Acadian heritage and culture.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister responsible for L'nu Affairs.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 748**

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

Whereas Elder Dr. Albert D. Marshall of Eskasoni First Nation received a Lifetime Achievement Award in June from Indspire, an Indigenous national charity that invests in education, to recognize his commitment to preserving Mi'kmaq culture, heritage, and language; and

Whereas Elder Dr. Marshall is a residential school survivor who lost his language and had to learn it again, and whose service to community highlights the importance of Mi'kmaw language, which is now recognized in legislation as the original language of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas Elder Dr. Marshall has dedicated his life to sharing traditional knowledge and the teachings of the ancestors, including the concept of Etuaptmunk, or Two-Eyed Seeing, with the next generation and is an inspiration to all of us;

Therefore, be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Elder Dr. Albert D. Marshall in receiving this national award and thanking him for his tireless work to preserving Mi'kmaq culture, heritage, and language.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 384 - An Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, Respecting Firefighter Protection. (Kendra Coombes)**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

FRED TILLEY: Before I introduce my bill, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

FRED TILLEY: In the West Gallery, we have with us from the Heart and Stroke Foundation Kathryn Rand, Director of Health Policy and Systems, and Hilary Richardson-Murphy, Senior Advisor, Health Policy and Systems. Welcome.

We also have Mr. Stephen Boyd and Mrs. Debbie Boyd, founders of the Jordan Boyd Foundation. You'll remember the member for Bedford Basin did a member statement about the Boyds earlier in the session.

Debbie and Stephen Boyd are the parents of Jordan Boyd. In 2013, at the age of 16, Jodan Boyd died from a sudden cardiac arrest while attending a hockey training camp. No working AED was available in the rink. In 2014, the Boyd family founded the Jordan Boyd Foundation.

The Jordan Boyd Foundation is dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of knowing CPR and knowing how to use an AED. In addition, the foundation has donated and placed AEDs in many high-traffic areas around the province in partnership with EHS Nova Scotia. I'd ask the House to give our guests a warm welcome. (Standing ovation)

**Bill No. 385 - An Act to Improve Public Access to Automated Defibrillators. (Fred Tilley)**

**Bill No. 386 - An Act Respecting Pay Equity and Pay Transparency. (Hon. Kelly Regan)**

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

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Before I begin, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: In the Speaker's Gallery is a brave young man whom I'm so proud to introduce to this House. Alexander Petrie is a true hero who risked his life to save others during the flood in Hants County this Summer. I would ask that all members join me in giving this hero a warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

#### **PETRIE, A./SMITH, M.: FLOOD RESCUES - RECOG.**

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Speaker, all Nova Scotians are aware of the damage and devastation the July floods have caused the communities we call home. It's during these tragic events when true heroes step forward, putting their own lives at risk to save others.

At only 30 years of age, best friends Alexander Petrie and Mike Smith were two of the first people on scene during the worst of the flooding. They went in the water, doing what they could do to help for more than an hour before emergency services could arrive. In a true example of Bluenoser spirit, these two brave young men gave everything they had to rescue as many people as they could.

I ask that everyone please stand and show your gratitude to these two local heroes.  
(Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

### **ESTEY, STEVEN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I want to add my voice, and that of our caucus, to acknowledge the passing of Steven Estey. Steve was actually one of the recipients of the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal awarded through my office. I wasn't able to get the medal to Steve on the day of the ceremony, so I'm so glad to be able to present that today to his family.

He served as the Council of Canadians with Disabilities' Interim National Coordinator, educator and disability advocate, and as North America's representative on the World Council of Disabled Peoples' International. He was an advisor to the Government of Canada delegation to the U.N., which drafted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Steve's work focused on teaching, writing, and strategic implementation of this policy in Canada and around the world.

As a member of the CCD's International Committee, he developed extensive experience in international development, human rights, and disability. He worked with NGOs, governments, and multi-lateral agencies around the world for over a decade to advance the human rights and the economic situation of people with disabilities.

Steve also testified before several parliamentary committees, and spoke at the U.N., where he served as a member of Canada's delegation to the negotiations on the U.N. Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities treaty. Steve was fondly referred to as Canada's grandfather to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for his commitment in representing the country and bringing both the Convention and optional protocol to Canada.

Prior to his untimely passing, Steve was looking forward to working on a quality-of-life index for persons with a disability, using a human rights lens to monitor the progress the province is making on implementing Nova Scotia's accessibility legislation, Access by Design 2030. I know many members would remember him at Law Amendments Committee during the process of that bill.

I want to recognize today the positive impact Steve's work has had on people living with disabilities, and for advancing Nova Scotia's accessibility.

[9:30 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

### **ESTEY, STEVE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I, too, would like to honour and acknowledge the life and legacy of Steve Estey, along with my caucus. He was the most tireless advocate I have ever encountered, and I've encountered a lot of advocates. It was an honour to know him. He dedicated his life to advancing the rights, dignity, and equity of people with disabilities, and he did it with brilliance, wit, humour, and joy.

He was a passionate advocate and change-maker for disability rights in Nova Scotia, Canada, and on the global scale. We've heard about this already, but it bears repeating: He was part of the delegation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He also worked on the ground in more than 30 countries to support organizations that supported people with disabilities. He played a pivotal role in developing disability laws here at home, such as the Accessibility Act here in Nova Scotia and the Accessible Canada Act, and due to his numerous achievements and relentless advocacy, among other accolades, in 2021 he was awarded the Nova Scotia Human Rights Award.

The work and legacy of Steve Estey does not end with him. I ask all members of this House to join me in honouring his memory and committing to continue the fight for equal rights for all.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

### **HOLMES, COL. DAVID: NEW 12 WING CDR. - WELCOME**

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Madam Speaker, I rise today to welcome Colonel David Holmes to Shearwater as the 12 Wing Commander, as well as his lovely wife Marika and their children, Jason and Lauren.

Colonel Holmes, from Brantford, Ontario, joined the Royal Canadian Armed Forces in 1994. He attended the Royal Military College, graduating with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and earned his wings in 1999. In more recent years, Colonel Holmes gained experience in civil-military co-operation as an Intergovernmental Emergency Management Committee member. Colonel Holmes comes to 12 Wing Shearwater from the Canadian Forces College, where he completed the National Securities Programme.



I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in welcoming Colonel David Holmes and his family to Nova Scotia and to our Shearwater community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **MAINE MASS SHOOTING: IMPACT - CONDOLENCES**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I want to take a moment to acknowledge the tragic events that have unfolded in Maine over the last two days: 18 innocent lives have tragically been taken too soon in the community of Lewiston, Maine.

Nova Scotians have strong ties to New England. This is particularly true for the area I come from, and where other members come from, in the tri-counties, where we've had sea connections to New England for over 200 years. Hearing the stories of innocent lives taken far too soon is a chilling reminder of the events that happened in our own province in April of 2020. In that tragedy, our province experienced great loss, but we also gained great strength. It is now time to share that strength with our friends in Maine, who are dealing with the aftermath of a terrible tragedy.

I would ask all the members of this House to join me in sending our thoughts, condolences, and love to those impacted and who will continue to be impacted, whose lives have been changed forever in Maine.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **ESTEY, STEVEN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

SUSAN LEBLANC: I would just like to add a few words about my friend and neighbour Steve Estey. I first met Steve when he was the NDP candidate for Dartmouth North in 2013. I canvassed with him and was amazed by his ability to connect with anybody and everybody on the doorstep. He was genuinely interested in people and their stories, and he would have been a great MLA. After that election he remained involved with the NDP in Dartmouth North, and when I was elected in 2017 he was a mentor and a terrific help to me.

Aside from his incredible work as an advocate for people with disabilities, Steve was a wonderful community member and neighbour. At the local level, he generously advised on questions of accessibility in the Halifax region - for example, working with my theatre company, Zuppa, to make sure the work it was producing was accessible to people with disabilities, and advocating for technologies to be used in performing arts that are inclusive and innovative.

More than all of that, Steve was a loving husband, father, son, and brother, and a great friend to many. At his funeral, there were many stories that were very funny of his friendship and hilarity from the days from StFX and beyond. They were beautiful stories.

Steve's loss is somewhat still incomprehensible, and I extend my deep sympathy to all who are missing him still.

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

### **CARROLL, JOHN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Today I rise to speak about an important man from my community, John Carroll. John was strong, intelligent, practical, strategic, and loyal. He never had a bad word to say about anyone, but if he liked you, he was there - 100 per cent - and he was your biggest fan. He was brilliant - and I mean a brilliant businessman - and a committed community member getting involved in just about anything.

He was a wonderful father. He fought for what was right. Sometimes that's hard to see in people, but he managed to do it every time. I saw him as one of my dearest friends, a mentor, and a father figure.

I almost didn't come today, but I asked myself, "What would John do?" John wouldn't let the team down. He always told me, Don't let your team down. Be loyal to the people who are loyal to you. Show up and make sure your voice is heard. I'm sorry. He always said, Don't let them see you sweat. I'm sorry, John, they're watching me sweat today, but I'm sweating from the eyes. He deserves it, and he's going to have many days of a lot of people sweating over the loss of this wonderful man.

I just ask that the House might give a little bit of silence and respect to his family - Gail, Scott, Julia, and his wonderful grandchildren - and just show a little love to a true Bluenoser, a true Nova Scotian, and a proud member of this community and this province.

THE SPEAKER: I ask that we stand for a moment of silence, please.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

Please be seated.

The honourable member for Clare.

**COMEAU, CHAD: APP LAUNCH - CONGRATS.**

RONNIE LEBLANC: During the recent Festival acadien de Clare, Chad Comeau unveiled his interactive recipe app, Clare Cuisine +. Chad, an independent game developer, specializes in creating apps and games centered around specific themes, with a strong focus on projects related to Acadian culture. His most recent app features recipes that celebrate iconic dishes like la râpure, which has been part of our local culinary heritage, as well as dishes from newcomers to the area. Through this app, the wider world can now discover the flavours of our Acadian cuisine, and the people of Clare can explore the culinary traditions of our new neighbours.

I would like to extend congratulations to Chad Comeau for the successful launch of his app and extend our best wishes in his future endeavours.

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

**ORGS.: CHIASSON BASK. TOURN. - CONGRATS.**

KENDRA COOMBES: From Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, Greenfield Elementary hosted the Jim (Fox) Chiasson Girls Basketball Tournament. It was a fun-filled couple of days.

I want to congratulate all the participants. The New Waterford Celtics walked away with gold at the end of the basketball tournament. The Tompkins Tigers brought home the silver, and St. Anne's Cyclones took home bronze.

I ask the House to congratulate all the organizers, volunteers, coaches, participants, and families on an excellent tournament.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**MACINNIS, BONNIE: VOL. AWD. RECIP. - THANKS**

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Speaker, at the 49<sup>th</sup> Provincial Volunteer Awards held recently, Bonnie MacInnis was recognized for her volunteer work. Bonnie generously donates her time to enrich our community. She and her husband Danny own Myers Tea Room on Main Street in Antigonish, where used books are sold with proceeds going to St. Martha's Regional Hospital. So far, more than \$10,000 has been raised.

Bonnie organized and provided more than 400 free Christmas dinners during the COVID-19 Christmas. She is also a board member and a volunteer for the Heritage Association of Antigonish, which actively contributes to preserving local history. As well, Bonnie extends her support to Mayfest at StFX University and the Special Olympics.

I ask all members of this house to thank Bonnie and all Nova Scotians who volunteer their time and skills for the betterment of our province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**BEALS, TERRY: VOL. AWD. RECIP. - CONGRATS.**

CARMAN KERR: Each year, a number of my constituents are celebrated at the Annapolis County Volunteer Event. One of the very deserving 2023 honourees was Terry Beals.

Terry has been a member of the board of directors at the Wilmot Community Hall for more than a decade. He's always ready to put his handyman skills to use on projects around the hall or to help out a neighbour in any way that he can. Terry has also volunteered with the Mountain Ridge 4H Club, the Annapolis Valley Exhibition, and Valley Bulldogs Rugby.

I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Terry Beals on being recognized at the 2023 Annapolis County Volunteer Event.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**FAIRFAX HOMES: OPENING - CONGRATS.**

SUZY HANSEN: Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the opening of Fairfax Homes in the Preston Township - eight new affordable homes for eight families.

Akoma, through the Rapid Housing Initiative, was selected to receive funding from all three levels of government to build affordable homes for people of African descent. Rents will range from \$650 to \$1,000 a month, depending on the tenant's income. This initiative has provided stable housing for generations - generations in a home changing generations.

The initiative was recommended by, built by, and for our community. The goal of Akoma is to help Black Nova Scotians prosper, whether in their businesses, their homes, or other services that can be found in the Preston Township at Akoma. Akoma has provided stability and community for eight families. This is just the beginning.

Our historical legacy is embedded in the work of Akoma by commemorating the laneways to Dr. Donald Skeir and sisters Mary and Cherry Paris on Paris Lane. Naming the homes after Donald E. Fairfax is also another commemoration.

I'd like all members of this House to congratulate Akoma for their amazing work and continued success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**BARRELLING TIDE DISTILLERY: AWDS. RECIP. - CONGRATS.**

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Barrelling Tide Distillery in Port Williams as they celebrate gold, silver, and bronze awards in four competitions since January 2023.

Russ and Colleen Murphy opened the Barrelling Tide Distillery in 2016 in our beautiful Annapolis Valley. The distillery was built on the principle of supporting neighbouring farmers and producers and striving to use the finest locally sourced ingredients possible.

The awards include: in the Canadian Artisan Spirit Competition, Five Fathoms Dark Rum, Gold with Distinction and Best in Class Rum traditional category; Windward Whiskey, Gold in the Single Grain category; World Gin Awards, Tide Gin, Silver in Best Contemporary Style Gin category; World Whiskey Awards, Windward Whiskey, Silver in the Grain category; Canadian Whiskey Awards, Windward Whiskey, Bronze.

Please join me today in congratulating Barrelling Tide Distillery on their multiple awards and wishing them the very best in the future.

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

**PALM TREE KITCHEN: OPENING - RECOG.**

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I rise today to recognize a new business in Halifax. Maybe you've noticed a new inviting restaurant on Quinpool Road. With bright colours and games out front, Palm Tree Kitchen catches your eye. Inside is bright and fun too, with an eclectic mix of upside-down pink umbrellas, retro glasses and plates, and a VHS player showing all of our old favourite movies.

Palm Tree Kitchen is a Caribbean-inspired sandwich and small bites restaurant. It's also Halifax's only rum bar dedicated to educating Nova Scotians on the spirit of rum. It's the latest project by entrepreneur Demetrius Ferguson, who leads with warmth, determination, and style.

Demetrius, or "Meech," is a previous Quinpool Road entrepreneur and a much-loved, sometimes feared, trainer at Evolve Fitness, winning gold for Trainer of the Year from the Coast Awards. Winter is coming and Palm Tree Kitchen will help keep us warm with big island flavours, fun, and love.

I ask all members to welcome Palm Tree Kitchen to the Halifax restaurant scene.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

[9:45 a.m.]

**MARTELL, BROOKE: DARTS COMPETITION - CONGRATS.**

HON. BRIAN COMER: Speaker, I would like to extend congratulations to the very talented Brooke Martell, who just got back from competing in the World Cup of Darts in Denmark. Fifteen-year-old Brooke is from the picturesque village of Gabarus and has dart-playing in her blood. Her whole family plays darts and has played for as long as she can remember. Brooke met folks from around the world during this amazing experience and traded her Team Canada jersey with a new friend from Australia.

Brooke's family, and indeed, all of our community, are proud of Brooke's accomplishment. I would also like to extend a special thank you to local residents who held a fundraising auction to support Brooke's travel to Denmark.

I ask all members in the Legislature to wish Brooke all the best in her future endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

**HOLMES WHITEHEAD, RUTH: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Speaker, this Summer, Nova Scotia lost a treasure, an adopted daughter who loved this province and its history and culture. Ruth Holmes Whitehead authored or co-authored 20 books of non-fiction. She was a recipient of the Order of Nova Scotia for her tremendous contribution to the province.

You may not recognize her name, but Ruth's book *Black Loyalists* informed Lawrence Hill's bestseller *The Book of Negroes*. Her work on Mi'kmaw legends and quillwork is treasured in the homes of many First Nations families.

In her later years, Ruth suffered severe ill health. Nevertheless, she managed to produce a book on the influenza pandemic of 1918, published while we were coping with COVID-19 in this century.

Ruth Holmes Whitehead was known as a scholar, but she was also witty, warm, and welcoming. I hope all members of this House will join me in extending our condolences to her daughter and all those who loved her. Ruth will be missed, but her legacy will live on.

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

**ORGS.: MINI COAL BOWL - CONGRATS.**

KENDRA COOMBES: The Mini Coal Bowl occurred from Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup> to May 13<sup>th</sup>. The Mini Coal Bowl is a boys' basketball tournament where local elementary schools compete. Congratulations to all participants on a fast-paced two days of basketball.

At the end of the tournament, Sydney River Elementary walked off with gold, Harbourside Elementary in Whitney Pier brought home silver, and Inverness took home bronze.

I ask the House to congratulate all the organizers, volunteers, coaches, and participants on an excellent tournament and congratulate me for Harbourside. (Laughter)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

**WEYMOUTH FIREBIRDS: CH'SHIP WIN - CONGRATS.**

HON. JILL BALSER: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Weymouth U11 A Tier 5 Provincial Baseball Champions.

In August, the Weymouth Firebirds hosted the 2023 U11 baseball provincials at the Cricket Field. Teams from Berwick, Liverpool, and Prospect competed in a three-day tournament. The Weymouth Firebirds went undefeated, winning all four games. They played their final game against Liverpool, earning them the first-place title.

Congratulations to Quinlan Amero, RJ Muise, Axl Muise, Jensen Mullen, Tyson Melanson, Benjamin MacNutt, Zachary LeBlanc, Jax Stanton, Félix Robicheau, Dominic Deveau, Malachi Sabean, and René Thibault, and coaches Nathan LeBlanc, David MacNutt, Bernadine Babin, and Paul Thibault.

Speaker, I ask that all members in the Legislature join me in a round of applause to recognize the Weymouth Firebirds on their well-earned championship title. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**ORGANIZERS: WINTER SHELTER - RECOG.**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, today I rise to once again draw attention to the plight of those in our communities who find themselves living unsheltered or homeless. With Winter approaching, the situation always becomes more critical.

Last Winter, a group of community-minded people in the town of Amherst in Cumberland County worked together to establish a Winter emergency temporary shelter. With the support of the Department of Community Services, the shelter opened and helped

a large number of people who found themselves needing a place to stay before it closed in May.

We know the need is still there this year, and thanks to the Amherst Ministerial Committee and their respective congregations, there will once again be a shelter available through the upcoming Winter months. The Holy Family Catholic Church is offering space in their building for the overnight hours and it, along with other churches and groups in the community, will be offering hot meals and a place to go during daytime hours.

All of this is happening in conjunction with the Cumberland Homelessness and Housing Support Association, better known locally as Cornerstone.

I would ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and thanking all of those, not only in my home area but across the province, who are going above and beyond to offer assistance and safety to those who find themselves homeless.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**S. SHORE LABOUR CCL.: LABOUR DAY EVENT - RECOG.**

SUZY HANSEN: Speaker, in 1894, the Dominion of Canada declared the first Monday of September to be a legal public holiday to recognize the many contributions workers had made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of Canada.

For many years, the South Shore District Labour Council has sponsored a Labour Day event which is open to the public. This year, my girls and I attended the event in Liverpool at Privateer Park. We heard from many organizations: the YMCA and Souls Harbour Rescue Mission, just to name a few. There was great music, food, and awesome organizations were present, and I'm so glad that I didn't miss it.

The Labour Council provided free hot dogs and beverages, and members of the Lunenburg/Queens Special Olympics hosted the food booth. There were lots of laughs, lots of fun things to do, and I'm grateful that I was able to attend.

I'd like all members of this House to join me in celebrating the South Shore District Labour Council and all the hard work that they do in this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**KING, DANIELLE: RAINBOW REG. - RECOG.**

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Speaker, I rise today to recognize a business owner in Mahone Bay who has been working hard to ensure that her businesses are safe and inclusive spaces.



Danielle King and I had a meeting at her restaurant, Betty's, at the start of the Summer. We had a great chat and she shared with me that Betty's and one of her other businesses, The Kitch'inn, are now Rainbow Registered.

For those of you who have not heard of Rainbow Registration, this is a national accreditation for 2SLGBTQI+ friendly businesses and organizations. When a person sees the Rainbow Registered symbol, they know they will be accepted, welcomed, and made to feel safe. In order to gain this accreditation, a business or organization must meet a stringent set of quality standards.

Businesses making commitments to be inclusive is something to be congratulated. Please join me in celebrating the work that Danielle King has done in attaining Rainbow Registration.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

#### **HUNTING SEASON: OPENING - RECOG.**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I just want to say that hunting season begins today. I want to take a moment to wish everyone out there today and into the future a successful and fun season. Be safe, enjoy your time in nature, and to every Nova Scotian: Remember, we all share the woods. Be careful, be alert, and be supportive.

I'd like all members of the House to wish all Nova Scotians a happy hunting season.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

#### **BLOODY SUNDAY IN SYDNEY: 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIV. - RECOG.**

GARY BURRILL: Our Legislature needs to acknowledge that this past July 1<sup>st</sup> marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Sydney. On that date in 1923, in the course of a bitter strike of steelworkers against the British Empire Steel and Coal Corporation, mounted provincial police charged the crowds around the plant wielding hardwood clubs and injured a large number of both strikers and members of the public, including an elderly woman who was beaten unconscious, a boy trampled by horses, and a woman who miscarried.

J.B. McLachlan, leader of the miners union, then led thousands of coal miners off work in support of the striking steelworkers. In response to his public denunciation of the police action, McLachlan was charged with seditious libel and sentenced to two years in Dorchester Penitentiary.

Members of this House will note that this is the same charge that was brought against Joseph Howe nearly a century earlier in a trial in what is now the library of Province House. Howe, however, unlike McLachlan, was acquitted. Though Howe was more successful in court and in elections than was McLachlan, I wish to register the view on this 100<sup>th</sup> year since Bloody Sunday that it is J.B. McLachlan who stands as the greatest Nova Scotian.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

### **PARTICS.: WALK FOR VETERANS - RECOG.**

CHRIS PALMER: On September 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre, I was pleased to join veterans and civilians in the first Canadian Walk for Veterans event ever held in Halifax. I had the privilege of representing our government and joining Their Honours Arthur and Patsy LeBlanc. It was also fantastic to hear singer-songwriter Terry Kelly preview his latest song, "Heroes of the Homefront," in honour of military families.

The Canadian Walk for Veterans is held annually, inviting Canadians to walk shoulder to shoulder in recognition of our serving military, veterans, and their families. The primary goal is to provide an opportunity for Canadians to learn about the challenges faced by those who serve our country and to express gratitude for the sacrifices they make on our behalf. Net proceeds from this year's walk will go to supporting the valuable work of the Halifax & Region and Greenwood Military Family Resource Centres. These family resource centres provide an invaluable service to active members who are relocating with their families and veterans transitioning out of service.

I'd also like to thank Honorary Colonel Dan Hennessey for the invitation and his constant work on behalf of veterans. Finally, I am truly honoured to represent the proud military community of CFB Greenwood in this Legislature. I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking all those who have worn and continue to wear the uniform on behalf of all of us.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

### **OUTHIT, TIM: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES**

BRAEDON CLARK: One of the most important relationships we have as MLAs is with our local municipal representatives. Over the last two years I've been very lucky to work closely with Councillor Tim Outhit, who has announced he will not be running in the next municipal election in a year's time, in October 2024.

First elected to council in 2008, Tim has a well-earned reputation as an accessible, transparent, and responsive councillor. As we all know, it's very common for constituents

to come to MLAs with municipal problems like garbage or snow removal, or the need for crosswalks and speed bumps. Whenever that happened, Tim picked up the phone when I called. As a new MLA, I always knew that Tim would be there with wise advice and good ideas to fix a problem together.

I know Tim will keep responding to Facebook comments until his last day in office, but I hope he's able to enjoy a very well-deserved retirement. On behalf of all my constituents in Bedford South, thank you, Councillor Outhit, for your public service.

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

**CITADEL ARMY MUSEUM: 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIV. - RECOG.**

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, 2023 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Army Museum Halifax Citadel. I'm sure that many of my fellow members and their families have stopped by the museum atop Citadel Hill. There is truly an incredible amount of immersive history preserved within the fortress.

This includes war souvenirs sent to and from the front, one of the area's largest military badge collections, and perhaps the most unique of all, an impressive amount of trench art made by Canadian soldiers with whatever materials they had on hand on the front line. Anything from used bullet casings to broken belt buckles would often take on a whole new life.

I ask my fellow members to join me in wishing the Army Museum Halifax Citadel a happy 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and many more years to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

**PARLEE, GLENN & KATHRYN: BUS. SUCCESS - CONGRATS.**

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Glenn and Kathryn Parlee, who own and run Liverpool Adventure Outfitters in Brooklyn, Queens County.

In July they celebrated 20 years since they first opened, and in that time, the business has undergone growth and achieved success. The store is a one-stop shop for outdoor recreational equipment such as kayaks, bikes, and paddleboards, and serves as a base for organizing and leading paddle tours and excursions, both locally and as far afield as Central America.

Known locally as simply Parlees, Liverpool Adventure Outfitters is synonymous with quality goods and expert advice delivered with great pride and always with a smile. Very well done, Glenn and Kathy and the whole team. Here's to the next 20 years.

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

### **MAINE MASS SHOOTING: IMPACT - CONDOLENCES**

HON. BEN JESSOME: Speaker, I just want to add my voice to the members in the House today who have made remarks with respect to the tragic situation that's actively taking place south of the border, in the state of Maine. Maine was my home for a couple of years, and I have a number of friends who still live there. I just want to let them know I'm thinking about them. My alma mater, Hebron Academy, all the folks down there, stay safe and be well. Hopefully this person is brought to justice soon.

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

### **TOWN HOUSE CIT. SERV. LEAGUE: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

JOHN WHITE: Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge the work of the Glace Bay Town House Citizens Service League. For years now they have been an essential organization in the town of Glace Bay, supporting seniors by providing everything from clothing to Meals on Wheels.

For example, just this past February we had a severe cold snap, and realizing the extreme hazard this presented to those most vulnerable, they opened up their building as a comfort centre. Staff came in on their scheduled day off to work over 12 hours and to make sure anyone in need was taken care of that day. They offered homemade soup, sweets, coffee, tea, charging stations, and even provided electronic devices for clients' use. Their efforts and generosity certainly did not go unnoticed.

The Town House Citizens Service League is always there to help meet the needs of the community of Glace Bay. On behalf of the residents of Glace Bay, I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to this wonderful organization.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The time is now for Oral Questions Put By Members to Ministers. The time is 10:00 a.m., and we will finish at 10:50 a.m.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

[10:00 a.m.]

### **PREM.: HOMELESSNESS CRISIS - ACT**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, Winter is coming. Temperatures have already fallen below zero this week, and hundreds of people have been left out in the cold. The Premier has said he is a government of action, but we have not seen action or even a lot of empathy or concern over the homelessness crisis that has happened in this province, which has doubled under this Premier. In fact, we have actually seen comments that indicate the government doesn't care about this. We've had a former minister compare the increase in homelessness in the Summer to Summer camping, who said it's just like a lot of individuals are looking at an outlet for freedom, to be outside, much like ourselves. If this is the attitude, we are not going to deal with this issue.

My question to the Premier: When can we see some demonstrable action on this homelessness crisis so we can get people off the street and save them before the cold comes?

THE PREMIER: Speaker, it would be incorrect to suggest that the government doesn't care. This government cares about the homelessness crisis that is certainly happening here in Halifax and across the province. I was in Ottawa two weeks ago, and it's a big issue there. It's an issue across our country, for sure. I think all governments are focused on this. Certainly, our government is focused on this. We know it's a challenge and people are struggling, and we'll continue to look for ways to support those, especially as the Winter approaches.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, Winter is almost here. The Premier keeps telling the province he's going to double the population while homelessness is exponentially growing and people can't find homes to live. There are over 1,000 people in HRM alone who are experiencing homelessness, hundreds of others across this province. The 100 Pallet shelters the Premier announced are not expected to arrive in January, let alone be set up.

My question to the Premier: Where does he expect people to go in the next three months to find shelter as cold comes into our province?

THE PREMIER: We're working with government agencies and entities but not-for-profit organizations as well. I think some of the initiatives around housing will certainly help. I would ask the members opposite to get behind those. I know they're not impressed with the investment in affordable housing, but it is an investment in affordable housing. They may not be impressed with the tiny homes, but it is an important part - one part of an overall solution. They may not be impressed with the granny-suite investments - also an important part of the solution. There are many facets to this.

Of course, we need to get to the root cause. We know there are a lot of different situations there. We need to support every Nova Scotian.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, here's what we're not impressed with: In the Premier's long-awaited housing strategy, there's nothing for permanent emergency shelter while homelessness is doubling in this province under his watch. The Premier can't even find emergency shelter locations for 50 people in HRM, and we are dealing with over 1,000 now who are homeless.

My question to the Premier: How can Nova Scotians have confidence in this government's housing plan when it doesn't even address the most acute symptom of our housing crisis: homelessness and the need for emergency shelter?

THE PREMIER: Of course, we have said many times that the solution to the housing challenges in Nova Scotia, in HRM, and across the country - the solution is more housing. That's why we have been so focused on making sure that the developments are moving forward where they should, where it's appropriate. That's why we have been investing in programs to support Nova Scotians. Over \$300 million this government has invested in trying to make sure that Nova Scotians have access to safe, affordable housing. We'll continue to make those investments in housing. We know there's more work to be done. We're worried about those Nova Scotians as well, Speaker. We'll continue to make those investments to support them.

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

#### **PREM.: FINANCIAL HELP FOR SENIORS - COMMIT**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: My question is for the Premier. The government likes to point to the Seniors Care Grant as evidence of their targeted support, but that's the problem: it's too targeted. It can't be used for medication, food, or rent, three essential categories. The Premier will know that the rate of poverty for seniors in Nova Scotia is the highest of any province in this country. Thousands of people who have worked their whole lives are now filled with dread at every trip to the grocery store and are going without for the last part of the month.

Will the Premier commit to doing more to help the pocketbooks of seniors in this province?

THE PREMIER: We understand the pressures that Nova Scotians are under, for sure. That's why we've made changes to the Seniors Care Grant. I think we've increased it once or twice so far. We'll continue to look at that. We've made increases to the Nova Scotia Child Benefit in both of the last two budgets. We'll continue to look at that to support families. That's why we're working to reduce child care fees. That's why, for

seniors specifically, there's been no fee increase for Seniors' Pharmacare - and Family Pharmacare, for that matter.

We are taking a number of targeted supports. I thank the member for recognizing just one of those, but there are a number of targeted supports that we've initiated under this government.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: With respect, Speaker, programs that help parents and children don't help seniors. Every other province, except for Prince Edward Island, has a benefit that is automatically paid to seniors to top up their incomes, no matter the expense. In Alberta, it's up to \$3,637 a year for a single senior. In Newfoundland, it's up to \$1,516 each quarter. In Saskatchewan, it's \$360 a month, and so on.

In P.E.I., seniors can apply to the Seniors Independence Initiative for reimbursement of up to \$1,700 a year for expenses. Every other province but one has something better than what we have in Nova Scotia.

My question to the Premier is: Why does the Premier think that seniors here deserve less than seniors in the rest of our country?

THE PREMIER: Of course our government has great respect for seniors, and to imply anything but is just completely unfair. We are looking for ways to support our seniors. We'll continue to look for additional ways.

The member mentioned a bunch of innovative initiatives in other provinces. We're open to looking at that. I'm sure there's probably an Opposition member in each of those provincial legislatures talking about Nova Scotia having the innovative Seniors Care Grant and asking, "Why don't we have that?" That's an innovative thing that we have.

We'll continue to look for ways to support seniors. I'm very proud of the work that the Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care is doing to make sure that we're investing in seniors, that we're there to support seniors and their families, which is equally important.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I don't think anyone across the country is looking for less support than they have, but if the Premier wants to do more, we have some ideas. He could waive the Seniors' Pharmacare fees. Freezing them is not enough, but he's already refused to do that, so let's try this: He could introduce a seniors' income benefit, as there exists in other provinces, so that no matter the expense, seniors here can live in dignity.

My question to the Premier is: Will the Premier commit to making sure that seniors have enough to make ends meet, and introduce a guaranteed seniors' income benefit for every older person in Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: I get that the Opposition doesn't know where to go with the innovative Seniors Care Grant, other than to be negative about it. It's not something to be negative about. It's an important initiative that matters to seniors in this province. They know that it's a good thing. Is there more work to be done to support seniors? Absolutely there is, and we'll continue to do that under the guidance of the minister as we move forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **DOJ: CROWN ATTORNEY SHORTAGE - EXPLAIN**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Earlier this week our caucus highlighted the serious staffing shortages in our jails and our courts, and now we're finding out that there's a massive gap in the number of Crown attorneys in our province as well. This has led to some pretty terrifying outcomes in our province: a 30 per cent backlog in homicide cases; a 100 per cent increase in the backlog of sexual assault cases, and I'll table that as well.

This is an issue that is unique to Nova Scotia. Speaker, these are the most serious crimes committed by the most dangerous offenders.

My question to the Premier is: Why is he allowing Nova Scotia to be so weak when it comes to dealing with the most egregious crimes in this province?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I am very aware of the concerns and challenges that are currently facing our Public Prosecution Service. I've been working hard with the Acting Director to try to address these. I would point out that there are currently five vacant Crown positions. I do know that the union has been requesting additional positions. What I would suggest is that we really need to work on filling those five first, and then we can certainly look at what we do going forward. Whether it's five, whether it's ten, whether it's 100 new Crowns we hire - until we fill the five vacant ones, we're not going to be any better off.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I'll point out that it took this government two years to fill one vacant director position. How long is it going to take them to fill five vacancies in this position? Here's what's going to happen. The Jordan rule indicates that cases must be tried at the Provincial Court within 18 months, and the Supreme Court within 30 months. If not, perpetrators are going to walk free.

There are more Jordan applications before the court now in Nova Scotia than ever before in our province's history, and I'll table that. This government refuses to staff our criminal justice system. The Premier refuses to answer questions on this issue of serious concern to people, and he'll go out to the press and say that he's in here working all day when he answers one question a day and doesn't debate on any bills.



My question to the Premier is: Will the Premier tell us why his government is allowing criminals to walk free in Nova Scotia who are committing the most egregious crimes in this province?

BRAD JOHNS: I will say that I was disappointed when the letter came out this week, because recently we have been reaching out and sharing with our Justice partners opportunities and ideas that the department has, such as increasing and looking at new specialized intake teams to help decrease those times with Jordan.

Last year we actually put \$798,000 to hire seven new Crowns. When we want to talk about why timelines and why things are wrong, the reasons we're having the problem with the Public Prosecution today is because for the last 10 years - 8 of those years - that party, when they were in government, didn't do anything.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

### **LSI: EI FOR SERIOUS ILLNESSES - CHANGE**

HON. KELLY REGAN: All members of this House have constituents who are battling serious illnesses like cancer and MS. The federal government has changed EI rules to allow people with serious illness to get 26 weeks of EI coverage if they need time off work to deal with their illness. Our constituents who have serious illnesses need the Province to change rules to allow for unpaid job-protected leave of up to 26 weeks for people with serious illnesses. The Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration indicated last session that she was in favour of this - the Premier, too.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Does she see the health value in Nova Scotians with serious illnesses having access to job-protected leave and EI while they are in the fight of their lives?

HON. JILL BALSER: Yes, when this was raised in the last House session - I think everyone can agree that serious long-term illness, including cancer, is something that touches all of us, either personally, or through a loved one, or through a family member.

I don't have an update right now, but this is still of great importance. The department is still looking into it. We do know that there were changes with EI as the benefits to align - there is advocacy out there. It doesn't take away from the importance of continuing to look into this issue and continuing to have those conversations.

KELLY REGAN: Yet again, we have a government that keeps claiming that they're a government of action, and they're sitting on a piece of legislation that would actually help Nova Scotians. They could bring forward this bill. There is no reason not to do this. Where is the legislation?

JILL BALSER: I just want to remind members in the House that when we had important issues that were brought forward, our government did act on it. I just want to remind members that pregnancy leave, of course, was a change that we heard in this House through personal stories, acted, and brought forward legislation to make that change.

We know that these issues are important and, of course, hearing from Nova Scotians is part of that process. This is still an important issue, and, as we mentioned, we know that it touches so many Nova Scotians in a personal way, or through a loved one, or through a family member. It's still an important issue, and we're going to continue to look into it.

[10:15 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

### **DHW: URGENT MEDICAL CARE - IMPROVE**

CARMAN KERR: Last year, this government shut down the 24/7 collaborative emergency centre in Annapolis Royal and replaced it with an urgent treatment centre that is only open banking hours three days a week. That's a massive downgrade in service.

Constituents tell me that the UTC is generally fully booked, often before they open for the day, and it's challenging to book an appointment even for multiple days later. There's nothing urgent about that at all. The only option for residents in the Annapolis Royal area is to access same-day care by going to Middleton or Digby, when it's open, or going on to Yarmouth or Kentville.

In August, I wrote to the Minister of Health and Wellness to request timely and meaningful action. My question to the minister is: What is this government doing to improve access to urgent medical care for the people of Annapolis, and what are their plans for improving this situation?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, through working with the primary care providers in that community, we did move to an urgent treatment model, based on their availability and based on what they felt that they were able to manage in the community at the time. We do continue to work in the Valley, and in the Annapolis area, around recruitment.

We also look at the assets in the Valley. There are a number of facilities that are within a reasonable distance of one another. We're looking at things like the mobile care units and the opportunity to have specialized clinics.

We continue to work with the practitioners there, and also with the Mid Valley Region Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee, in order to find more human resources so that we can staff that area.

CARMAN KERR: In that letter that I referred to, and I'll table it alongside other correspondence, there was a heartbreaking note to me from the children of a prominent member of the Annapolis Royal community who passed away earlier this year. They strongly feel that if their mother was triaged when she first presented at the UTC, rather than be instructed to go to home and call back in a couple of days because they didn't have any openings, her chances of surviving would have been greatly improved.

An excerpt from their note to me was:

"We both feel that on many levels, the province's health system failed our mother . . . Rapid and meaningful reforms are clearly needed and we trust this information will be helpful. We sincerely hope that measures are taken to ensure other Nova Scotians, and their families, receive a fundamental better care in their time of need."

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Does she believe that the people of Annapolis Royal and this family are being adequately served when it comes to urgent health care needs?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, I believe that our health care workers are working tirelessly every day to provide care. We know that there is an issue around health and human resources in this province.

We have been working very, very hard in order to recruit people internationally. We've increased the number of seats across all programs in this province. This, again, is an issue with human resources. We have done a number of things, including passing legislation in the Spring around the Patient Access to Care Act, so that we can welcome people from across this country to come and work here.

We're looking at immigration missions. We're working with the colleges in order to increase our staffing across this province. We're very focused, and I know that health care workers are working tirelessly in order to provide excellent care in this province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **MAH: STATUTORY DECLARATIONS - ALLOW**

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Recently, when attempting to help a Nova Scotian get a rent supplement, my office learned that the program will no longer accept statutory declarations in place of a lease. In my community, and in many others across the province, there are countless reasons why someone might not have a lease, and it can be a lifeline to be able to get a statutory declaration in place of one.

This change will mean that people could lose their homes. My question to the minister is: Why is the government so insistent on making it harder to find and keep a place to live?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I can say that we are in the process of tightening up some of our procedures, making them more in line with federal government procedures when dealing with programs that we put out. The reality is that we had people apply for rent supplements without a lease and then never end up renting. We had to tighten that whole process up.

We recognize that it does make it a little bit harder, but certainly they are pre-approved for the rent supplement. They simply need to rent the apartment before we provide the money.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, that's exactly what I'm talking about. It is impossible for many people to have a lease. Some people have rented for years and years and years and their lease is long gone. A statutory declaration was what they used - a legal document - to replace the lease. Now those are not being accepted. Our office was told: Due to policy changes, we are no longer accepting confirmation of occupancy forms or statutory declarations in lieu of leases. A caseworker will reach out to the client and let them know that they will need a full lease going forward. I will table that email.

This comes on the heels of the supplement program's eligibility being slashed from 30 per cent of a person's income being spent on rent to 50 per cent before they qualify. This is very, very bad for many people. Even fewer people will qualify for rent supplements because of these changes.

Will the minister reverse this very bad decision?

JOHN LOHR: The reality is we have one of the most robust and strongest rent supp programs in the country. I've said it before in the House: When I go to federal-provincial-territorial meetings, the other provinces are saying, We are not spending our Canada rent supp money, can we spend it on something else? We're in the opposite position. We're far exceeding the federal contribution, and we will continue to do that. We now have almost 8,000 people on rent supps, and we continue to invest further in rent supps, and recognize their importance in our province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**ACSW: HOUSING FOR VIOLENCE VICTIMS - PROVIDE**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, the need for Bryony House, a women's shelter, is so high that they're having to put time limits on how long women and children who are fleeing violence can stay at that shelter. One woman currently using Bryony House's services says that she has been searching for months, looking at hundreds of apartments, and can't find a place to live. I'll table that.

With women having nowhere to go, there's a chance they could end up back with their abuser, homeless, or in a very vulnerable situation. This is happening while this government is letting some of our most serious offenders - including those committing murder and sexual assault - walk back out on our streets.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Where does he suggest these women go to be safe while our streets are getting less safe?

HON. JILL BALSER: Thank you to the member opposite for raising this important point. We don't want any individual, woman, or family to experience having to go back to a violent situation. We know that we have to provide more housing. That's one thing that's been referenced many, many times.

I hope that people can see that when we invest in people and the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, we need people to build the housing that's needed in this province. Making sure that more and more Nova Scotians see the value of entering into the apprenticeship system, to be able to build the stock that's needed - that's what we need to be focusing on right now.

We also recognize, of course, the important work that shelters provide, and knowing that we're getting to work by building the housing that's needed.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Here's the issue. We are talking about vulnerable people who don't have money who are fleeing abusers, and the government's response is, We're going to try to build more market housing.

That is not the answer to the situation. Here's the problem with the housing strategy: There is nothing for emergency housing in this plan. There's nothing for emergency shelters. This is happening at the same time that some of our most violent and dangerous criminals are walking away because the Minister of Justice is failing to prosecute them. This is creating a very dangerous cocktail for vulnerable women in this province who find themselves on the street, who are subject to being dependent on their previous abuser or who become subject to human trafficking.

This is terrifying, and it needs attention. What is the government doing to deal with this very troubling and dangerous situation that is developing and getting worse under their government?

HON. JOHN LOHR: As all members will know, we have a priority access portal in public housing. We know it's wait-listed. We're absolutely concerned about these issues that the member brings up.

The reality is that one of the things we're doing in public housing is trying to deal with overhousing. That's because the vast number of our units are one-bedroom units, but mostly women fleeing domestic violence need three- or four-bedroom units. We need to get those three- and four-bedroom units empty. We know we could have about a thousand people placed if we dealt with that.

We're dealing with that. It's an area of deferred maintenance, I would say, that just needed to be done. It had never been worked on.

We have other portals, as well, for women fleeing violence, which I'm sure . . .

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

#### **RTA: RENT CAP INCREASE - ADDRESS**

LORELEI NICOLL: Speaker, I was contacted by a senior in my riding who lives on a fixed income, like many seniors. Their rent went up 5 per cent this August, before the 2 per cent rent cap ended. The current cap of 2 per cent per year remains in place until December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. Does the Minister of Service Nova Scotia agree that the rent cap was not supposed to be increased if you were in the same unit until the end of this year?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: As with any dispute between a tenant and a landlord, if that matter goes unresolved, either party is encouraged - and I encourage the member to encourage her constituent - to apply for the program. The change only comes into effect this January, so the existing 2 per cent rent cap should be still in place.

LORELEI NICOLL: Seniors should not be forced out of their apartments or worry daily about whether they will be homeless. It's a fine line these days. Where am I to direct people to go under this undue stress when they don't have enforcement agencies to help them when rules are being broken? The Residential Tenancies Program is too complicated. When you have a situation like this, it's imperative that it's met with in a timely manner.

COLTON LEBLANC: The program should not be complicated. Part of our efforts, previously and now, remain to educate and bring awareness to the existing rules for both tenants and landlords. My office has shared with all caucuses several Residential

Tenancies Program guidebooks. If the members have not yet received them, we're very happy to share those guidebooks with them.

With respect to the Residential Tenancies Program, it is made to be easy for tenants and landlords to resolve an unresolved dispute. In this case, I'd encourage the member to encourage her constituents to apply to the program.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

### **DHW: PARAMEDIC SHORTAGE - ADDRESS**

CARMAN KERR: Paramedics are a crucial part of our emergency health team in our province. Unfortunately, there's a severe paramedic staffing shortage in our region. I was recently provided with staffing data for the 28 core emergency trucks or units in the Western Zone for the months of August and September. I'll table this information. The numbers are shocking and almost unbelievable: For August, the total staffing average was 58 per cent. In September, the staffing average was 59 per cent.

Shift staffing percentage was as low as 38 per cent, and was never above 80 per cent. During every shift, ambulances sit idle at bases in Annapolis and across the province because there are no staff to operate them, which results in increased wait times and poor patient outcomes.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: What is the government doing to reduce the paramedic staffing shortage in my constituency, the Western Zone, and the entire province?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: One of the things we've done - and we've talked about it on many occasions in the House - is separating emergency response from transport operators. Certainly, that has been a very important step. Only 14 per cent of transfers are done currently by paramedics.

We've increased the number of seats. In 2023, 68 new paramedics have graduated from the Primary Care Paramedic Program, with another 34 expected. We've increased the number of sites where paramedicine is offered in Dartmouth, Sydney, Stellarton, and Yarmouth. We offer an \$11,500 rebate with a return-of-service agreement to those entering the program.

Additionally, we're looking at immigration. While we do have to grow our own workforce, it will take us some time, so we're looking very carefully at markets where we can immigrate from other areas.

CARMAN KERR: I've said this to the minister in private: I certainly acknowledge some of those actions they've taken. That pilot was introduced by the previous

government, so I appreciate Stephen McNeil introducing that. The paramedic shortage results in unbearable working conditions for our paramedics. I know the minister knows that. The same number of calls come in regardless of the number of staff that are available, so they are attempting to do the same amount of work with fewer resources.

Paramedics tell me way too often that they can't get meal breaks, they can't use the washroom, they're forced into overtime, and they can't get vacation. They feel the weight of poor patient outcomes that result from increased wait times, and that's no fault of their own.

[10:30 a.m.]

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Does she think that the deterioration of paramedic working conditions, resulting from staffing shortage, is acceptable or not?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, we do have a working group with a number of people, a number of organizations, where we do talk about paramedic working conditions. One of the things that has happened is that we've increased support for paramedics who are in the field. Medical communications as an example - we now have a 24/7 physician, a registered nurse in medical communications, as well as a critical care paramedic to support people in the field.

We also look at the triaging of calls. We now have single paramedic units where individuals can go with the support of that medical comms physician and assess people in their homes to see whether or not they need to be transferred, and 40 per cent of those individuals currently do not.

We are looking at ways in which we can give different environments for paramedics to work so that they have a time of rest, and also looking at ways that we can support both their mental and physical wellness.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **EECD: DRINKING WATER SAFETY - ADDRESS**

SUZY HANSEN: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. Following an investigative report into the safety of school drinking water in 2019, the province released testing reports that showed the water in many of our children's schools had lead levels well exceeding Health Canada guidelines.

The government of the time assured that the Department of Education would be tasked with remediation of infrastructure and with ensuring safe drinking water for



students. A disclosure we received from an FOI request showed that this department has no reports of updates on this issue.

My question to the minister is: Does the minister not understand what happens to a child when they are exposed to lead?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Absolutely, students deserve and are entitled to access to safe schools, safe learning spaces. That means environmental safety as well, which includes the safety of the water, includes the safety of the air - it includes all aspects of safe spaces.

When that report came out, the regions and CSAP were directed to do evaluations and updates to ensure that all of the drinking water available in schools was safe. I can assure the member opposite that continues to be the case today. Drinking water is safe in schools. Students have access to clean, safe, drinking water.

SUZY HANSEN: I wasn't asking about bottled water or water that was being brought into the schools. Health Canada guidelines dictate that water sampling, which means from faucets at daycares and schools, should be conducted at least once per year because young children are especially vulnerable to the effects of lead toxicity, with potential cognitive and behavioural impacts.

Despite this, drinking water at many schools has not been tested since this issue was exposed by media three years ago, and the department has no records of reports or updates since then. I have tabled it.

Other provinces have regimes in place to monitor school water quality, but Nova Scotia children are being left at risk.

My question to the minister is: Will the minister either commit to regular testing and remediation or explain why she thinks it's acceptable that if a child drinks from a water fountain in their school that they are at risk of lead poisoning?

BECKY DRUHAN: Once again, I will assure the member opposite and all Nova Scotians that drinking water in schools is safe for our students. Our regions ensure that is the case.

When that report came out, investigation, evaluation, updating, and remediation was done. Our schools continue to provide safe, clean drinking water for our students.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**DPW: WILLIAMS LAKE DAM REPLACEMENT - UPDATE**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, as our climate continues to change, the integrity of our infrastructure becomes more and more important. The Department of Public Works and the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables work becomes vital. Both departments have identified the dam at Williams Lake as in critical need of replacement. For the last few years, I have stood in my place asking for updates on the dam's replacement.

My question to either of the ministers is: Can the people of Williams Lake get an update on the replacement, along with an up-to-date timeline on when the dam replacement will begin?

HON. KIM MASLAND: My department, working with Build Nova Scotia, has some great news for the residents of the area. We have started the process of completing the design work, the studies and the surveys that are needed for this project. Certainly, as the project progresses, we will update the residents.

I just want to take a few minutes and highlight the great work that Build Nova Scotia is doing. We're working through this dam process. We released the cell project yesterday, and you know what? It just seems like yesterday, I remember when I introduced the legislation for Build Nova Scotia for the Crown corporation, and there was so much negativity and criticism from that side, but boy oh boy, we're getting the work done now.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Thank you to the Minister for the response and thank you to all the great folks and work they do at Build Nova Scotia. (Applause)

Speaker, I'd like to continue on the theme of infrastructure. Sambro is an amazing community with some of the best events you will ever attend. Over the last year the community applied for the former fire hall land to be transferred to the community. The community plans to take the land and turn it into a vibrant community centre, which I can't wait to see.

My question to the minister: Can the community get an update on the land transfer process and a date when the community can expect to take ownership of said land?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: This is a topic we have conversed about over the last year, year and a half. Certainly, we have heard from members of the community that they're anxious to see this. There was some more information that had to be shared between HRM and the community group that has that interest. That has been brought into the department and we're looking forward to that going through the final stages and looking forward to being there for the ribbon-cutting.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**DHW: PET SCANNER DELAY - UPDATE**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: It's another session with the same question that I've asked. The Minister of Health and Wellness knows it's coming. The community again, is looking for an update on a commitment that was made for our new PET scanner for the Cape Breton Cancer Centre. As everyone knows, the Cancer Centre is well under construction. My question to the minister is: Can she update the House on the discussions around that important piece of equipment, not only for Cape Breton but also for mainland Nova Scotia?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I thank the member for the question. The Nova Scotia Health Authority and the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation continue to talk about the PET scanner. We appreciate that there is money to actually purchase the equipment, but when we did the feasibility study, there were some significant challenges around the complexity of that piece of equipment. The operations are very, very important.

They are looking at and investigating things like the development of the isotopes, the reagent material. It's a very complex situation, how it will be ongoing, the operations of that. I just want to assure the member that it is a very complex issue. The piece of equipment itself is not the issue. We know that there's good support in the community for that, but the ongoing operations and availability are a bit of a challenge. We continue to discuss opportunities and challenges to see where we go next.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: The minister is right: Millions of dollars have been raised to purchase the equipment. The community has really rallied across the Island because they all see the importance of it. I talked to doctors about it in the community and the numbers I hear - in the last year alone, it was north of 600 residents of the community we know actually made the trip to Halifax for that test.

We also know there are hundreds who didn't because they didn't have the financial capacity. There is some support through the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation, but we know that some people just don't have the financial means or the transportation means to get to Halifax to take that test. As I've said before, it would not only service Cape Breton, it would service mainland Nova Scotia. Having a second PET scan would be so important for the community.

Can the minister provide a timeline for when the work will be done and the study will be done so finally the residents of the community can move forward with the important piece of equipment?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: As I said previously, it isn't actually the purchase of the equipment, it is the ongoing operations. If we were to purchase it today, we would not be able to use it. That doesn't get us any further in the community at all. We need to look at the staffing model. We need to make sure we have the skill set. We need to make sure we

have the maintenance ability for that project, the ability to create the isotope and the reagent.

Those conversations, while they take a while, they are big, complex conversations as to whether or not there is capacity there. We'll continue to have those conversations and understand how best to serve the residents of Cape Breton and Eastern Nova Scotia in regard to cancer care.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

### **DAE: NURSES DISCRIMINATION - EXPLAIN**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Northern Nova Scotia does not have a university offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program for students who want to become a registered nurse. Nova Scotia Community College does offer a practical nursing program; however, the wait-list is long, often taking two to three years to get accepted. For these two reasons, those many students living in northern Nova Scotia, including Cumberland County, choose to study in neighbouring Moncton, which is only about 40 minutes away. They live at home in Nova Scotia, but commute to Moncton each day.

Earlier this Summer, I learned that, unfortunately, nurses who choose to receive their education in New Brunswick are not eligible for the Nova Scotia Student Loan Forgiveness Program. These nurses are full-time residents, but because they travel to New Brunswick, they are not eligible.

THE SPEAKER: Question.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Sorry. My question to the minister is: Can the Minister of Advanced Education please explain why these nurses are being discriminated against?

HON. BRIAN WONG: Speaker, we know the value of nurses. We know and appreciate anybody who wants to go into the profession. We have a number of available programs right here in Nova Scotia. We have a number of available programs right across our Nova Scotia Community College system. We even have a bridging program that we are piloting where nurses can go from the practical nursing program into the registered nursing program. We also have one of the most generous student assistance programs across the country, which eligible Nova Scotia students going to Nova Scotia post-secondaries are eligible for.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Perhaps the minister may not understand, although I have sent communication to the minister in a letter and we did not get a

favourable response. The fact of the matter is, the nurses - many live in Cumberland County in Nova Scotia, but studied outside of the province only less than an hour away, and they are not eligible to receive the same student loan forgiveness program as other nurses. It's harming our ability to recruit and retain nurses in Cumberland County.

It is discriminatory. It is a discriminatory practice against registered nurses and LPNs who are trying to live in Nova Scotia, many in Cumberland County, and they're not being given the same rights as other nurses in the province. It's wrong.

[10:45a.m.]

My question to the minister is: When will this minister commit to making this change against discrimination, against nurses, many in Cumberland County?

BRIAN WONG: I reject the whole premise that we're being discriminatory against people who want to be nurses in Cumberland County. We continue to increase our nursing programs right across this province, having recently introduced a new program at Acadia University that will be opening in September. (Applause) We continue to . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order. The honourable Minister of Advanced Education has the floor.

BRIAN WONG: We continue to look at our Nova Scotia Community College system as being a partner in post-secondary education that you can advance to go into a university education. We have the 2+2 program offered at all of our campuses, with over 70 programs that you can use to go on to a university degree.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

### **RTA: NO RENT CAP ON NEW TENANCIES - EXPLAIN**

GARY BURRILL: My question is for the minister responsible for residential tenancies, who is aware, I'm sure, of a recent CMHC-funded study, which I'll table, which shows that Nova Scotia has the second-highest rate of evictions - after only British Columbia - of any province in the country. Now it's not hard to see why we have this high, high rate of evictions. The rent cap doesn't cover new tenancies, and so there is an enormous financial incentive for landlords to evict their current tenants in order to bring in new tenants who won't be covered by the rent cap. Does the minister not recognize that by having a rent cap that doesn't cover new tenancies, the government is actually powerfully incentivizing landlords to put people on the street?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I recognize that any time a tenant is faced with an eviction notice, it does put them in a difficult situation. I would remind the member and all Nova Scotians that when, in fact, they do receive an eviction notice, it doesn't mean they're

being evicted. The fact of the matter is - and you can't pick and choose which half of the rules you want to talk about. It's important to talk about the entirety of the rules.

When a notice is provided, again I'll remind the House that the tenant can apply to the program and should apply to the program. In fact, it stops the clock on that notice until the matter is heard. I'll remind the House again, it's important for both tenants and landlords to understand what they're putting pen to paper, especially when it comes to leases.

GARY BURRILL: The minister is evading the core point that Nova Scotia has the second-highest rate of evictions in all of Canada. With high eviction numbers comes high numbers of people, of course, being without a home. There's a recent survey by the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia - I'll also table it - of people living outside in the HRM. It found that 22 per cent of them are there because they've been renovicted, a key strategy of landlords in order to bring in new tenants and thereby get around the rent cap. Why will the minister not put an end to the terrible number of evictions we have in Nova Scotia by making the rent cap cover all tenancies, new and old?

COLTON LEBLANC: On the topic of renovictions, we passed - it was part of my first legislative package as Minister of Service Nova Scotia, to bring strength and protections pertaining to renovictions. That was back in the Fall of 2021. Again, I would encourage all members of the House to share with their constituents the entirety of the rules and the entirety of the statistics.

Pertaining to renovictions, there have been 267 applications for renovictions in the province since March of 2022. Thirty-seven of those have been approved. Again, if a tenant is served with a notice for a renovation or whatever it may be, I encourage the member opposite to encourage his constituents to apply to the program. Again, it stops the clock on that notice until the program has the opportunity to hear that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **DOJ: ABUSERS NOT BEING PROSECUTED - EXPLAIN**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We have highlighted today the dangerous situation developing in Nova Scotia with vulnerable women who are fleeing abusers not able to find locations to live. This is becoming a bigger safety issue because we also have some of our most serious offenders who aren't seeing their day in court, who aren't seeing justice. That means they're back out on the street. What is the government's strategy to specifically deal with this terrifying situation that's affecting a number of women in our province who are becoming more vulnerable by the day? I'd ask the Minister of Justice to respond.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I certainly appreciate the question from the member. As I said before, I'm not quite sure if the member across the way knows that there is a difference

between provincial and federal courts and that the things that are dealt with at each are different. I would say the member almost seems to make it sound like it's the worst of the worst. Typically, that would be a federal - I do recognize we do have some issues with prosecutions, but I do think that we need to make a distinction between what is being charged and going through a provincial court and what is going through a federal court. Fearmongering and going on sometimes doesn't do anybody any good.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I'll remind the Attorney General there are some pretty serious provincial offenders, and those offenders aren't having their day in court and they're walking free because of provincial vacancies in our Crown prosecutor system. The answer today is unacceptable. It's insufficient. We've got vulnerable women who cannot find places to stay. They're trying to stay away from abusers, they could be forced to go back, they could be subject to drug abuse, human trafficking - the list goes on. What the Minister of Justice has said is it's because of eight years of inaction.

This is happening under this government. It's getting worse, and this is the only province that this issue is happening in. Why?

BRAD JOHNS: Because for eight years, they neglected justice in this province. If they took care of the problem, I wouldn't have to.

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

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

We will have a short recess while we set up for Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[10:51 a.m. The House resolved itself into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Nolan Young in the Chair.]

[5:38 p.m. The CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Nolan Young resumed the Chair.]

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

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

**Bill No. 329 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (amended) and Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act (amended).**

and the Chair has been instructed to advise that the committee has made some progress on this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: That concludes government's business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. Government business will include Committee of the Whole House on Bills and third reading of Bill Nos. 321, 322, 327 and 334. The Law Amendments Committee will meet from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on that day.

THE SPEAKER: There's a motion for the House to adjourn to meet again on Monday between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 5:39 p.m.]



**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 749**

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

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

Whereas the birth of a child is momentous event and marks the beginning of a very satisfying journey down a long road, where the rewards far outnumber the challenges; and

Whereas a new baby is like the beginning of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities, author Edna J. Leshan wrote; and

Whereas on October 17<sup>th</sup> Natalie and Owen Vouri welcomed their daughter Quinn Leslie Vouri into the world;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Natalie and Owen on this miraculous event in their lives and wish them many more happy years as parents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 750**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the deCoste Centre for Arts & Creativity in Pictou West has celebrated its 40th anniversary with events hosted at the Caladh Marquee on the Pictou waterfront this past Summer;

Whereas the deCoste Centre for Arts & Creativity is a premiere, professional performing arts centre in northeastern Nova Scotia that has presented over 3,500 performances, including many international headliners, incredible artists from all over Canada, including Atlantic Canada's finest talent and countless local and regional music, theatre, and dance;

Whereas the deCoste Centre for Arts & Creativity is transitioning into the next chapter - construction continues for the expansion which includes the addition of the Pictou Library as a cultural hub in Pictou County scheduled to reopen in 2024;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the deCoste Centre for Arts & Creativity on its successful 2023 Marquee event on the Pictou waterfront and its current construction.

### RESOLUTION NO. 751

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Brenda Hutchinson and John Ashton authored a book, *Distinguished Descendants of Ship Hector Passengers, a compilation of profiles* in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the landing of the ship Hector in 2023;

Whereas the Ship *Hector* Descendants Project researched and compiled over 100 profiles of ship *Hector* descendants into a book, with over 200 images of men and women with extraordinary achievements;

Whereas the book launched on August 25, 2023 to many ship *Hector* descendants, family, friends, and history enthusiasts during the 250th anniversary of the landing of the ship *Hector* in Pictou, Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Brenda Hutchinson and John Ashton on the publication of their commemorative book, *Distinguished Descendants*.

### RESOLUTION NO. 752

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the Hector Arena at 38 Naylor Drive celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2023;

Whereas founded in 1972, the Hector Arena is an indoor ice skating rink that offers programs including adult and youth ice hockey, public skating, lessons and skating parties, a canteen, skate sharpening services, as well as an indoor walking track that was installed in 2020 for community members that found winter walking a challenge;

Whereas the Hector Arena has hosted a variety of community groups and large-scale events including the Pictou-North Colchester Exhibition, RCMP Musical Ride, and Fight League Atlantic;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Hector Arena for celebrating its 50th anniversary.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 753**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the Helping Hand Lodge, #34 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in River John is celebrating 145 years in 2023;

Whereas the IOOF #34 is good people doing good work, it is also a place for fellowship in all its forms, from hanging out and having fun, to discussion, to networking, to collaboration on creative and constructive projects, all with an eye not only for their own satisfaction but what they may offer the community at large;

Whereas the IOOF Helping Hand Lodge #34 aims to provide a framework that promotes personal and social development;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and celebrate the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Helping Hand Lodge #34 in River John for supporting its community for 145 years.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 754**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the Hector Exhibit Centre, now known as the McCulloch House Museum & Genealogy Centre, was opened on July 21, 1973 as a national exhibit centre, as a project by the federal government in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the landing of the ship *Hector*;

Whereas the McCulloch House Museum & Genealogy Centre hosts a broad range of exhibits focusing on local history and culture; an archival facility and research centre with a growing interest in the heritage of Pictou County and its role in the development of Nova Scotia; this abundance of archival material includes hundreds of personal and corporate documents, family histories, newspapers on microfilm, vital statistics and more; these resources combined with an extensive library provide visitors, students and academics alike with the opportunity to explore the heritage of eastern Canada;

Whereas the Pictou County Genealogy & Heritage Society operates and manages the McCulloch House Museum on behalf of the Nova Scotia Museum complex, and the McCulloch Genealogy Centre operates as a private community museum with a private, volunteer board of directors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the McCulloch House Museum & Genealogy Centre on celebrating its 50th anniversary operating in Pictou West.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 755**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the 2023 planning committee for the Town of Pictou organized a year of events and celebrations to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of the ship Hector and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Town of Pictou's Incorporation; and

Whereas the 2023 planning committee be commended for their dedication and work to honour the significant events in the Town of Pictou, including honouring the historic crossing of the first influx of Scottish immigrants to Nova Scotia that shaped the entire province; that despite some setbacks due to the weather, the community came together to celebrate this momentous occasion from September 15 to 17; people were able to walk aboard the ship Hector for the first time in three years to see the restoration progress since "The Great Lift" in June 2020; and

Whereas the 2023 planning committee has organized and presented a musical play, a ceilidh, various Gaelic events, musical show, a reception, a genealogy conference and popular ship tours;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the 2023 planning committee for its work in recognizing 2023 as a year of celebration in the Town of Pictou.

**RESOLUTION NO. 756**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the Northumberland Quilt Guild is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of quilting and friendship in 2023; and

Whereas members of the guild have shared their skills and joy in making quilts for their families, friends and organizations, specifically for the program, Quilts for Others, which has made quilts for the Dialysis Unit in Pictou, the Pictou Veterans Unit, Oncology and Palliative Care at the Aberdeen Hospital, Fire Victims in Pictou County, Tearmann House, the Neonatal and Oncology at the IWK, plus placemats for Meals on Wheels, and pillowcases for Tearmann House, Shiretown Nursing Home, the IWK, and the Aberdeen Hospital; and

Whereas members have the opportunity to display their creations at an annual quilt show held in Pictou, which draws many people to see these incredible works of art;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Northumberland Quilt Guild that has been a welcoming and inspirational group of people for the past 30 years.

**RESOLUTION NO. 757**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas 2023 is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of the ship *Hector* in Pictou West; and

Whereas the ship *Hector* replica has been built in honour of the historic crossing of the first influx of Scottish immigrants to Nova Scotia that shaped the entire Province of Nova Scotia in 1773; and

Whereas the ship *Hector* continues to be a landmark icon for heritage, tourism and genealogy for a large number of immigrants to Nova Scotia and residents of Pictou West;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the

250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ship Hector in 2023, and its significant contributions to Nova Scotia.

**RESOLUTION NO. 758**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the Town of Pictou celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its incorporation on April 30, 1873; and

Whereas the celebrations paid tribute to the efforts that emigrants made that have provided the growth and development of cultural, political, educational and industrial contributions that have chartered the course to the present day; and

Whereas the Town of Pictou unveiled a stone carving on the Day of Truth and Reconciliation to commemorate the Town of Pictou and Nova Scotia's Indigenous people relationship; the carving honours Pictou's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Town's incorporation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Town of Pictou's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its incorporation.