



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Karla MacFarlane

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First Session

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2023

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HALIFAX, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2023

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Karla MacFarlane

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Lisa Lachance, Danielle Barkhouse, Nolan Young

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants East.

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

Bill No. 351 - Bethel Presbyterian Church, Sydney Act (amended).

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

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Hants East.

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

Bill No. 369 - The Riverport Electric Light Act for Polling District No. 2, in the County of Lunenburg (amended).

and the committee recommends this bill to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. GREG MORROW: I beg leave to table a pair of annual reports for the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

THE SPEAKER: The reports are tabled.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. KENT SMITH: Speaker, I beg leave to table to the 2022-23 annual report for the Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Gaelic Affairs. (Applause)

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Do you believe in good? Do you believe in evil? A bheil sibh à creidsinn anns an diabhal? Do you believe in the devil? Part man, part beast, maybe with a pitchfork and sinister-looking eyebrows. The devil's presence among the Gaels has come in many forms, such as the black dog that roams around unexpectedly.

My father told me a story about that. I know the spot where it happened, near a bridge in Judique. He heard it from his uncle, and he confirmed it was true when he asked him and the other man who witnessed it years later. That other man's name was John

MacIsaac. It was in the 1930s. My grand-uncle would have been one of the Allan Ians. He was Allan Ian's son, MacDonalds from the Shore Road.

They went to a wake, and as their wives went inside, the men paused in the yard to have a little dileag - a drink. One of them said to the other, "A bheil thu à faicinn sion? (Are you seeing anything?)"

"Tha, tha mi gà, faicinn agus bha mi à saoilinn à robh mi a faicinn rudan. A bheil thus à faicinn sin cuideachd? (Yes, I am, and I was wondering if I was imagining things. Are you seeing that too?)"

He said yes.

They were seeing a well-dressed man in a black suit and hat who appeared to be walking on a slant. This slant - it was almost like he was coming down a set of stairs, and it was lit with a glow, down to the ground. As he reached the bottom, he disappeared into darkness.

Well, this happened a second time. I remember my father telling me this story. I think he was taking me to hockey one day, when I was young.

The third time, John MacIsaac said, "If he appears a third time, I'm going to ask him who he is." Sure enough, the man appeared again, and he asked, "Cò thusa agus gu dé an diabhal a tha thu à deanadh mun cuairt à seo? (Who are you, and what in the hell are you doing around here?)"

Speaker, I know that's unparliamentary language, but I'm hoping you'll give me some leniency, considering it's Halloween. (Laughter)

The man said nothing. He disappeared. After awhile, along comes a big black dog roaming around, and it too disappeared into the darkness.

My father, as I said, asked both men later in life if they saw what they said they saw, and they confirmed they did, so I have no doubt they were sincere. They thought that the dog was the Devil.

So yes, the Devil's presence among the Gaels has come in many forms: the black dog; the handsome man who arrives at the dance to the delight of the one who wished for him, until she looks down and sees the hoof as they dance. The terror that chased the horse and wagon until they reached a brook and crossed it, for the Devil cannot cross water.

Then there was the priest who faced an unknown force that prevented him from reaching someone who was sick and dying. On one night, he came for a carload who had crashed after a night of heavy drinking.

The funeral director turned white upon reaching the scene, which is kind of strange when you consider that a funeral director would be familiar with the tragedies that they would see on the roadside. He could not see the evil, but he could hear the chains of bondage and he smelled the rot and sulfur that was common to the presence. The priest, whom I knew as a much older man when I came to know him, climbed into the wrecked car to begin the fight for souls, or for the one that the Devil thought was his.

Is such a story true? Is it entertainment? Is there a spirit world around us? Why is it there? Perhaps for a moment we should take ourselves out of the world we see around us and ask a more appropriate question: Why are we here, and when are we going back there?

One of the most conclusive experiences with evil is the possession of a person or of a place. If that seems so far-fetched in our modern world, why is there belief in such phenomena in almost every corner of the planet, and amongst the beliefs of almost every ethnicity of people?

Christians can look to the Bible. Many would say that the people of the past did not understand mental illness. Maybe, but any time demons were cast out, those who wrote about it distinguished between afflictions of the physical and mental and afflictions of the physical sort. Often Jesus would silence them, so as not to reveal things that he did not want them to reveal about him at that time.

In truth - and I've done some reading on this - exorcisms are very rare, and can only be considered after modern science has ruled out all phenomena that it can explain. A good portion of them fail, because the person is often not able to give up the desires which brought it upon them. Our free will is a gift, but it can be a dangerous one.

There are also cases where the evil presence is brought on by another person. It's not just people who can be overtaken by an evil presence. Places can also become infested. Often, it is because somebody has opened a door to the other world - to hell. Evil cannot come until you let it in. A Ouija board, a séance, or maybe the location was marked by something like a murder, or a place where there was great harm done to others.

The story I wanted to tell you this year involved a house, and what was in the house moved to the barn. I think about the story I heard about it every time I drive by the place. I can't tell you the story, because the priests involved asked people to stop talking about it, and those wishes are still being respected to this day. I feel I should respect that, too. This affected people, a family, and the story would no doubt be painful for them.

As a child, I heard my parents speak about it. Years later, a cousin of mine, Danny MacDonald in Hamilton, was friends with one of the priests involved. This priest was a burly man I remember seeing when I was in junior high. He had big, powerful arms, and he worked in the prisons in Ontario as a chaplain. I don't believe he was scared of much in this world, but what he dealt with there was not from this world.

Who knows why it happened? Could a door have been opened by someone? Could someone else have brought it there, through no fault of the family that lived there? Could someone have put a buidseachè or a curse on the property?

Years after the happenings, I knew someone who had worked in the barn, and when they were forking hay down, the animals began to behave strangely. The sheep started darting to one end of the barn and hurling themselves against the wall, trying to get out. A horse was very worked up. Animals can sense things we cannot. Speaker, I think you're getting scared here. (Laughter)

[1:15 p.m.]

I won't say much more, but I will say animals were involved at the end of this exorcism, in much the same way they were involved in another very famous biblical story. Most have not seen these things. You may not believe them, but talk to someone who has. They'll tell you not to open these doors to the other world, for the consequences are very real. Even if things happen that would seem anything but believable, protect yourself, especially now at Oidhche Shamhna - Halloween - for the distance from this world to the next is but a breath away. There are those waiting eagerly for you should you decide to take a step on the wrong side of it. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: My head is spinning.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: There are certainly a lot of spirits in the member opposite's riding. I have another true story out of Inverness County today.

Legend has it there was a kolyak - an older lady - who lived in Port Hood, directly next to the graveyard. This one night - it was a warm Fall night - she had the windows open for some fresh air. She was headed to her bed. As usual, she got ready and dressed in her nightgown - a long white nightgown. When she got into bed, she heard sounds - a bleating. She peered out her bedroom window and could hear from the direction of that graveyard. She figured maybe a neighbour's animal, perhaps a young sheep, had got out and was trying to find its way home.

She headed back downstairs, threw on her boots, and headed toward that graveyard. Once there, she looked around, and though she could still hear the sound, she couldn't see anything that matched that sound of bleating. She walked around, following the sounds, and finally spotted an open grave ready for a funeral the next day. She walked over and sure enough, there was a small, young lamb miserably bleating down there. She tried to get it out, but try as she might, she wasn't able to, so she decided to clamber down into the grave to help it out. She managed to hoist that lamb out but got her bed-ready hair and long white nightgown dirty in the process.

Just at that precise time, there were three young folks walking around the lane that ran in front of that graveyard. They heard an animal, stopped speaking, and turned toward the graveyard. Imagine the sight that greeted them: an elderly disheveled lady, dressed in a long, soiled white gown, climbing out of a grave under the shimmering moonlight. That was surely enough to send them home in a hurry. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: The stories today have reminded me that I wanted to catch you up on what happened to me last year when I was crossing the Macdonald Bridge and bumped into the ghost of Helen Creighton. You may recall that happened. After that happened to me, I kept going back. I was just amazed by that, and I just wanted to talk with her again. I went back many times onto the bridge on a foggy night, and I never saw her again. It was like she was there and then not there.

This is a phenomenon in Nova Scotia. In Helen Creighton's book *Bluenose Ghosts*, she writes: "In Nova Scotia, there are many instances of things having been seen, which upon investigation were not there at all. Take for instance the strange occurrence on L'île à Frisée as reported by Mr. Stanislas Pothier of Pubnico . . . " Mr. Pothier's story follows. This man had come on a vessel and on landing decided to go for a stroll. He was walking along by himself when he came to a place with no trees or grass, but with a beautiful flower garden in the middle of a clearing. He couldn't understand how such a garden could be in such a place, particularly at this time of year, when it was too cold for flowers to be growing along the coast like that.

He didn't touch the garden, but went back to the vessel and told the other men about it. They thought it was very strange too, so a few of the crew went back to see for themselves, and he couldn't find the garden then or at any time after that. So these kinds of "there, but not there" phenomena - they're stories throughout Nova Scotia, from Duck Island, from French Village, from East Chezzetcook, from Digby, from Middle Musquodoboit, from Ingramport, Peggy's Cove, and right here in Province House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ooooooh . . .

SUSAN LEBLANC: I bring all of this up because the other night, something happened to me. It was one of the long nights - I can't remember which one, where we were sitting until midnight. It could have been any one. I was exhausted, frankly, and so I decided - while the bells were ringing at one point or another - to go into the library to have a sit-down and a quiet moment.

I went in, and the person sitting at the desk I didn't recognize. The computer was gone from the desk, and there was a woman sitting there. She had a beautiful silver tea service and a couple of teacups on the table. I said, "Hello," and she said, "Sit down, MLA

Leblanc, you've had a hard day. You've been working so hard. You deserve to sit down and take a rest." So I sat down with her at the desk, and she poured us a cup of tea.

Her voice was so warm and comforting, and we began to speak, and I thought, I love this. So we drank our tea, we talked about our families, we talked about what was happening in the Legislature. Soon enough, our teacups were drained, and she was pouring a second cup of tea. But then we realized there was no sugar. So I said, "Well, I'll just go to the lounge and get some sugar," because I was really enjoying this time with her.

I went into the lounge, I got the sugar, I came back, and she was gone. Sitting at the desk was David McDonald, the Legislative Librarian. He was working away on his computer, and I said, "Where's the woman who was just here?" He said, "I don't know what you're talking about. I've been here all night. I've been working, I've been listening. I've been here all night. There's no one else who's been here but me." I said, "I was just having a cup of tea with a woman at the desk."

He said, "Ohhhhh. You met Annie." I said, "Annie?" He said, "Annie Donohoe. She was a librarian here. She was the Assistant Librarian from 1889 to 1906, and then she was the sole librarian of the Legislature from 1906 to 1954. She loved to drink tea, and she would often pour tea for the members." Well, I was a little taken aback by that. So I gave my head a little shake and I came back into the Chamber. It was almost time to sit down for a recorded vote.

I literally walked like this, I was in a bit of a haze wondering what just happened, and I kicked something under my desk. (Teacup rattles)

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: (Laughter) Ooooooh . . .

SUSAN LEBLANC: At the foot of my desk, there was a teacup, and it said, "Property of Annie Donohoe." My blood turned from feeling very warm and comforted from talking to her to icy cold - and I discovered the very teacup that I had drunk from with the ghost of Annie Donohoe. I will table that. (Applause) (Laughter)

THE SPEAKER: Well done, everyone. Well done. (Laughter)

Are there any further member statements?

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, earlier I was going to table some documents to do with my member's statement, and I missed that before the member for Inverness stood up. I'm just wondering if I would be able to do that now.

THE SPEAKER: With the unanimous consent of the House.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

[TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, I would like to table documents to do with my member's statement: Food Banks Canada *Poverty Report Cards*, the Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia report, as well as copies of three letters from constituents regarding the Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program.

THE SPEAKER: The documents are tabled.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 761

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

Attendu que la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse est un organisme à but non lucratif dont la mission est d'appuyer et de promouvoir le développement des arts et de la culture de l'Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse; et

Attendu que depuis 2004, la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse a appuyé le développement continu des arts comme l'un des piliers du dynamisme de la communauté acadienne et francophone; et

Attendu que la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse offre des programmes à l'appui du perfectionnement des artistes acadiens et francophones professionnels et de la relève, organise des événements qui mettent en vedette ces artistes, et établit des partenariats pour renforcer le secteur des arts et de la culture en Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit que tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour reconnaître le dévouement, l'énergie, et l'engagement du personnel et des bénévoles de la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse dans le cadre de la célébration de son 20^e anniversaire.

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 Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support and promote the development of the arts and culture of l'Acadie of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas since 2004, the Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse has supported the continued development of the arts as one of the pillars of the Acadian and francophone community's vitality; and

Whereas Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse has programs to support the development of professional and emerging Acadian and francophone artists, organizes events showcasing these artists, and has partnerships to enhance the arts and cultural sectors in l'Acadie in Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the dedication, energy, and commitment of the staff and volunteers at the Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse as they celebrate the organization's 20th anniversary.

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 Finance and Treasury Board.

RESOLUTION NO. 762

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

Whereas Christine Sinclair will play one of the final games in her impressive career in Halifax later today as Canada plays Brazil on their journey to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games; and

Whereas she has left an indelible mark on the sport of soccer world-wide, being the all-time leading goal scorer in international women's soccer; and

Whereas Sinclair's enduring legacy extends beyond the field, serving as an inspiration to countless young athletes, exemplifying the values of humility, courage, and leadership;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize Christine Sinclair as one of the greatest soccer players of all time, and applaud her and her teammates for the pride they give to our country whenever they take the pitch.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 763

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

Whereas organizing an event of the magnitude of the 2023 North American Indigenous Games held in Kjiptuk, Sipekne'katik, and Millbrook in July, required an extraordinary effort by many, with significant planning and preparation; and

Whereas that team effort was evident from the one-year kickoff, through volunteer recruitment and training, to rollout of logistics and needs for all who participated in some capacity, and having to quickly pivot to ensure safety during flooding in Nova Scotia on the last day of scheduled events; and

Whereas the opportunity for all Nova Scotians and visitors alike to learn and participate in Mi'kmaq culture was truly a highlight and will have a lasting impact as we continue on our reconciliation journey;

[1:30 p.m.]

Therefore, be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the Organizing Committee and staff of NAIG 2023 in thanking them for their tremendous contribution to sport and culture here in Mi'kma'ki.

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 of the motion? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 387 - An Act to Amend Schedule A of Chapter 1 of the Acts of 2018, The Education Act, to Require Naloxone Kits in Public Schools. (Hon. Derek Mombourquette)

Bill No. 388 - An Act to Amend Chapter 31 of the Acts of 1996, the Sales Tax Act, Respecting Lower Grocery Bills. (Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 389 - An Act to Expand At-home Testing for Human Papillomavirus. (Hon. Kelly Regan)

Bill No. 390 - An Act to Amend Chapter 92 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Consumer Protection Act, Respecting Transparent Grocery Pricing. (Gary Burrill)

Bill No. 391 - An Act to Amend Chapter 217 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Income Tax Act, Respecting a Seniors Income Benefit. (Gary Burrill)

Bill No. 392 - An Act to Require the Government of Nova Scotia to Purchase Food Products from Maritime Producers. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

Bill No. 393 - An Act to Support Commercial Greenhouses and Vertical Farming. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Before I begin, I beg leave to make some introductions.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, certainly.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: In the Speaker's Gallery, you will find a number of volunteer firefighters from Chester-St. Margaret's whom I am incredibly proud to introduce to the House. I would ask the volunteer firefighters to stand as I say your name: Amos Robia, Peter Andrews, Clary Coolen, Mitchell Kaizer, Chris Turpin, Steve Shortt, Cody Stevens, Micayla Dorey, Doug Rines, and Blake Rafuse.

Over the past two years, our volunteer firefighters have faced numerous natural disasters with great skill and tremendous courage. I would ask that all members join me in giving them a warm hero's welcome to the Legislature. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome. It's nice to have you here.

The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

VOL. FIRE DEPTS.: FLOOD RELIEF - THANKS

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I rise today to bring recognition to our volunteer fire departments for their outstanding services to our communities. We had devastating fires and then floods within a 60-day period. This has been a demanding Summer for all those involved.

This has been a record year for fires in our province. Volunteer fire personnel were continually at the ready, and quick to respond to new developments. In many cases, they had real concerns about their own well-being and the safety of their families.

In July, volunteer firefighters were again called upon to assist with the devastating flooding that hit our province. Throughout the night of July 20th and into the weekend, they were called upon to pump out flooded basements and rescue residents stranded by flooded roadways. While performing this service, they had to contend with roads that were weakened or washed away by sudden erosion. They are true heroes.

On behalf of all Nova Scotia, I want to honour and thank the members of our volunteer fire departments for their aid and personal sacrifices on our behalf.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

NICKERSON, GARY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, I rise today in sadness as I join my home community of Yarmouth in mourning the loss of our very own Gary Nickerson. Gary Nickerson was one of Tri-County Nova Scotia's most trusted and respected voices in broadcasting. He was with CJLS Radio, now known as Y95, for over 28 years, and was the station's news director for many of those years. His voice, integrity, and leadership in broadcasting were truly missed upon his retirement.

After his retirement, he cohosted the podcast *Outside My Window* with his dear friend Mr. Quinn Taggart, which featured conversations with people in our community and outside, discussing local events and interests that have been the source of many engaging, meaningful, and enjoyable conversations. One of their highlights, I know, was when Dr. Strang appeared on their show for an interview.

Gary Nickerson was an engaging conversationalist and a respectful listener who brought out the best in his interviewees. Beyond that, he was a truly good person who was liked as much as he was respected. I was very lucky to have been interviewed by Gary over the years. I have fond memories, particularly of our conversations on *The Weekender*. But I'm even more lucky to be able to call Gary a friend.

I, along with so many in our community, will miss him very much. I ask this House to join me in extending our deepest sympathies to Gary's family at home, to CJLS, and all the friends who will deeply miss him.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, may I introduce some guests?

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

GARY BURRILL: It's a great joy for us to have with us in the House this afternoon two Halifax Special Olympians. I wish to speak about them each in turn in members' statements, but first, I'd ask Malcolm Rainey and Alfie McCarthy if they would please stand and receive the warm welcome of the members of the House of Assembly. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. It's so nice to see you, and to see your medals. Very nice.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

MCCARTHY, ALFIE: SPEC. OLYMPICS PARTIC. - RECOG.

GARY BURRILL: In the first of two statements, Speaker - I'll make the second when it comes to my turn again - the congratulations of the House are extended to Alfie McCarthy of Halifax, a team participant in Special Olympics soccer. Alfie takes part in Special Olympics soccer with the Halifax Titans, and unified soccer with Halifax City Soccer, and is recognized for being a team player, dependably respecting other team members and their roles. Alfie is known, in fact, for the way he plays with a great sense of community, and for an approach that always involves celebrating the achievements of others, at each goal celebrating and cheering and supporting all the members of the team. Alfie has worked hard to build his skills and is aiming toward winning medals in next year's Special Olympics provincial games.

I ask the members of the House to join me in wishing Alfie and his soccer teammates the best of outings in the Special Olympics provincial soccer program.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

CHRIS PALMER: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction, please.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

CHRIS PALMER: Speaker, in the East Gallery I have some guests here from Kings West, students from the Grade 7-9 class from Apple Blossom School in Grafton, with teachers and parents who've reached out to me. They wanted to come in today to learn more about the political process. I don't know how much they're going to learn today, but they're being entertained, for sure. And it's only going to get better, I think. I just want to welcome them. If I could ask all members - we had a little tour before the Legislature, and they asked some great questions. I just want to ask all members to help me welcome my guests to the Legislature. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: It's really nice to have you and have an opportunity to speak with you earlier.

The honourable member for Cumberland South.

FUNDY GEOL. MUS.: 30TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Fundy Geological Museum, which will be celebrating its 30th anniversary this November.

The Fundy Geological Museum allows you to explore Nova Scotia's ancient geological past and walk in the footsteps of some of Canada's oldest dinosaurs. The museum is located in Parrsboro along the majestic shoreline of the Bay of Fundy, where the world's highest tides erode the sea cliffs to reveal half a billion years of geological history.

[1:45 p.m.]

Please join me in congratulating Fundy Geological Museum on their 30th anniversary and wishing them many more years of success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

WATTS, JENNIFER: ISANS CEO - RECOG.

ALI DUALE: Speaker, today I would like to recognize Jennifer Watts, the CEO of Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, which is the largest immigrant-serving settlement agency in Atlantic Canada.

Jennifer also served as a councillor for the Halifax Regional Municipality for eight years before joining ISANS as the Director of Settlement and Integration. Her work plays a vital role in Nova Scotia's growth of its immigrant community.

I ask the members of this House to join me in thanking Jennifer Watts for her commitment and dedication to serving all newcomers in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

RAINEY, MALCOLM: SPEC. OLYMPICS PARTIC. - RECOG.

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, the congratulations of the House are extended to Malcolm Rainey, a team participant in Special Olympics swimming, silver medal team anchor.

Malcolm has been participating in Special Olympics swimming for two years. He began competing in swim meets at 14, with competitors ranging all the way from his own age up to older adults. Based on his commitment to practices and attending regional meets, he was selected to be a member of the Halifax Special Olympics swim team for the provincial Special Olympics competition in July in Wolfville.

He travelled with his team, swam in several individual events, and was the anchor for a silver-medal-winning men's relay. He also participates in Special Olympics multi-sport.

I ask members of the House to join me in congratulating Malcolm on the silver medal win and in wishing him all the best in future Special Olympics work. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

GRANDSON, ATLAS - BIRTHDAY WISHES

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, one year ago today, I became a nanny twice over and my life became even richer, as our family welcomed Atlas Starrett Robar into the world.

This incredible young human is kind, loving, bright, curious, and brave. He is quick to flash his beautiful smile. He loves to laugh, and his amazing blue eyes have a special twinkle that melts your heart. He adores his big brother and protector, Easton. He has already made all of us so proud.

Speaker, I ask all members to join me in wishing my beautiful grandson Atlas a very, very happy 1st birthday. Nanny loves you to the Moon, Goose.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

HALLOWEEN: CELEB. - RECOG.

BRAEDON CLARK: Halloween has always been one of my favourite days of the year, Speaker. I just wanted to wish all the kids who are going to be trick-or-treating in Bedford South and across the province a safe, happy, sugar-filled evening.

I will say that Bedford South is a great place to trick-or-treat. The houses are very, very close together, so you can fill up your pillowcases and your garbage bags several times over. We use those.

I just wanted to give a special shout-out to the two trick-or-treaters in my house, a very spooky skeleton and the prettiest mermaid you ever saw. We're going to have a wonderful night tonight.

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

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

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

LISA LACHANCE: Joining us today in the West Gallery is Dr. Jacqueline Gahagan, who is the associate vice-president, Research, at Mount Saint Vincent University. Let's make her welcome here in the House. (Applause)

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

GAHAGAN, DR. JACQUELINE: ORDER OF N.S. - CONGRATS.

LISA LACHANCE: I rise today to honour Dr. Jacqueline Gahagan, who will be inducted into the Order of Nova Scotia on November 9th. Dr. Gahagan is currently the associate vice-president, Research, at Mount Saint Vincent University, after serving as a full professor of health promotion at Dalhousie University.

Dr. Gahagan is a passionate advocate for addressing health inequities amongst marginalized populations, including those living with or affected by HIV and STIs, older 2SLGBTQIA+ folks and their access to housing, primary health care utilization amongst 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and end-of-life decision making.

Dr. Gahagan's academic expertise has been recognized as the co-director of the Atlantic Interdisciplinary Research Network on Social and Behavioural Issues in Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS, as a founding fellow of the MacEachen Institute for Public Policy and Governance and currently as an affiliate scientist with the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

In recent years Dr. Gahagan has led the call to ensure that former youth in care receive tuition waivers at post-secondary institutions.

Speaker, I ask all members to congratulate Dr. Gahagan for their Order of Nova Scotia induction and contributions to making Nova Scotia a healthier place.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

CLEMENTS, MARION: 95TH BIRTHDAY - CONGRATS.

HON. JILL BALSER: I rise today to extend congratulations to Marion Clements, who turned 95 years old on October 26, 2023. Marion is a proud resident of Weymouth Falls, where her roots in the community and surrounding area run deep. Marion is a Southville girl and at 95 she remains a powerful voice for her community. She attends many community events, loves the outdoors and gardening.

Marion has volunteered with the former Ladies Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion, Weymouth Branch 67, for many years, as well as at her church, the fire hall, and various events, such as the annual harvest suppers at the St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church in Southville. Nine decades have not slowed her down.

Speaker, Marion is a person who makes us all proud to call Nova Scotia home and that is why I ask that all members of this House share a round of applause in celebration for this wonderful woman, Marion Clements. (Applause)

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

FURLONG, JAKE: MOOSEHEADS CAPTAIN - CONGRATS.

HON. BEN JESSOME: I'd like to acknowledge Jake Furlong of Upper Tantallon for being chosen as this year's captain of the Halifax Mooseheads.

Jake grew up in Westwood Hills and started playing hockey with TASA. Jim Midgley, coach of the Mooseheads, said Jake exemplifies the values of the Halifax Mooseheads. His work ethic, consistency and commitment make him a great ambassador for the organization.

Jake was presented with his jersey in front of his teammates and Mooseheads coaching staff by his parents and Jim Midgley, head coach. Jake recently returned to the Mooseheads following training camp with the San Jose Sharks who drafted him in the fifth round of the 2022 draft. Jake was a second-round draft pick of Halifax in the 2022 Q draft and is entering his fourth season as a member of the Mooseheads. He set career highs with seven goals and 43 assists last season in the 10th franchise season.

I'd ask all members, Speaker, to join me in congratulating Jake Furlong of Upper Tantallon on being chosen as this year's captain of the Mooseheads.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

FOOD COUPON PGM: FUNDING - INCREASE

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, Food Banks Canada recently released a report in which Nova Scotia received the worst score in all of Canada, an F. Nova Scotia is lagging behind many other provinces in the pathway out of poverty. With no updated poverty reduction strategy and an insufficient framework to eliminate poverty and low incomes in the province, we find ourselves in a desperate position.

Nearly one in 10 seniors in Nova Scotia live in poverty, the highest ratio among this age group in all of Canada. Although poverty rates have dropped in recent years, including for seniors, the poverty rate for people aged 65-plus remains nearly two-thirds higher in Nova Scotia than the national average. The food bank report stated that 22 per cent of all Nova Scotians are food-insecure - 22 per cent. At the same time, the government has reduced the funding for the Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program. That program sets out to do many things in helping people achieve local food security.

Today, I'm asking the PC government to make food security a priority, along with local healthy food, and commit to not only reinstating the full funding for the Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program, but in fact, substantially increasing the funding.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: May I make a quick introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, please.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I would love to bring the House's attention to the West Gallery, where Cindy Fowler has joined us. Cindy is a resident of Dartmouth North - someone whom I've worked with on many occasions in the community. Please give her the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

FOWLER, CINDY: VOL. AWD. RECIP. - CONGRATS.

SUSAN LEBLANC: When the Halifax Volunteer Award recipients were announced last spring, I was very pleased to see Dartmouth North resident Cindy Fowler on the list. Cindy is a warm, friendly, and positive member of the Dartmouth North community. For over three years, Cindy has been involved at the North Grove. She completed the North Grove's Community Action training and became one of the centre's peer advocates in the spring of 2022.

In that role, Cindy has helped empower fellow community members by doing things such as helping people do their taxes, filling out forms like the Heating Assistance Rebate, helping people find resources, and advocating for people to get their lost benefits back. Cindy also worked at the North Grove in the kitchen, performing tasks such as meal prep and washing dishes.

In addition to volunteering at the North Grove and raising her son Alex, Cindy started the group Hope for Highfield to bring Highfield Park tenants together to push for better living conditions in their community. I ask the House to join me in congratulating Cindy on being named one of the District 6 Halifax Volunteer Award recipients and to thank her for her amazing contributions to our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

FIREFIGHTERS: FLOOD EFFORTS - THANKS

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Speaker, we know our volunteer firefighters often go beyond the call of duty, and today I wish to share an outstanding example that took

place in my constituency in the aftermath of the July floods. In the overnight hours of July 21st, torrential rain destroyed a section of Cornwall Road, a key connector for communities in the north of Lunenburg County.

Knowing Public Works crews had to focus on 100-Series highways and bridges in the immediate aftermath of that terrible weather event, the Cornwall & District Fire Department - under the leadership of Chief Mike Wilson, together with community members Sid Joudrey, Harold Wentzel, and Kendall Veinotte of Lawrence Veinotte Enterprises - undertook to repair the otherwise impassable road.

During one long day of work, they successfully restored connectivity to residents of the northernmost communities of Lunenburg County and ensured access for first responders. Please join me in expressing my profound gratitude for their efforts.

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

HORSMAN, RICK: RICKMYTRAINER - RECOG.

LORELEI NICOLL: Today I stand to recognize a local entrepreneur based in Cole Harbour, Rick Horsman, owner of RickMyTrainer. Rick is a personal trainer and bootcamp instructor with 15 years of experience. Rick began his career at Saint Mary's University, where he worked full-time until 2018 and continues to teach one of their premier classes weekly.

In 2016 he began RickMyTrainer, a small group personal training and bootcamp service which has proudly been serving our community ever since with a safe, comfortable environment. In September 2023, Rick took the plunge and opened his studio location, where he inspires his group to take control of their health while getting in the best shape of their lives through fitness, improved nutrition, and a deeper community connection.

Posted on the wall in Rick's studio is the phrase "Clear your mind of can't." I applaud Rick for continuing to foster and educate his group on their journey toward the fittest version of themselves.

THE SPEAKER: Order. It is now time for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers. The time is now 2:00. We will finish at 2:50.

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

[2:00 p.m.]

PREM.: JUSTICE SYSTEM - IMPROVE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: This government has failed to hire staff for our jails and our courts. They have dragged their feet when it comes to appointing judges. They won't hire Crown prosecutors. I will table all this. This has led to Jordan rule applications being at an all-time high in our province, which means alleged serious criminals aren't even having their day in court.

The Justice Minister, true to form of the government, laid all the blame on previous governments, when in fact, 20 per cent of Crowns have actually left the profession in the last year under this government's watch. My question to the Premier is: Why is he neglecting to properly staff our criminal justice system?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Obviously, issues around the justice system are of utmost importance, for sure. We're concerned about some of the backlog in the courts, for sure. I just want to take this opportunity to inform the member and correct a couple of his statements. Since we've come into government, there is now a full complement of judges. We've appointed eight judges since coming to government. We've appointed eight judges in just two years, so the member can deduce from that why we had to do that.

In the last two years, the Public Prosecution Service has received 13 additional FTEs, nine of which are Crown attorney positions. Of course, recruiting remains a challenge, but we'll continue to focus on supporting those working in our justice system.

ZACH CHURCHILL: It took him two years to appoint those judges, and only after the judges actually started making a fuss about this. Here's what's happening as a result in our criminal justice system - and this is unique to Nova Scotia. Other provinces are not going through this. We've got a 30 per cent backlog in homicide cases. We've got a 101 per cent increase in the backlog of sexual assault cases. The outcome of this is that these cases are being tossed, and perpetrators of serious violent crimes are walking our streets and are free to reoffend. Crown attorneys are actually telling us that people are going to die as a result of this. Does the Premier recognize that his inattention on the justice system is leading to a more dangerous situation for Nova Scotians with more violent criminals not going to jail?

THE PREMIER: I just categorically reject the member's statements. We are interested in, we're invested in, we're doing what we can to support our justice system. Of course, the member will know the justice system is separate. It's not for politicians to dabble in the justice system. The courts will schedule the cases that come before them. The courts will address them. As government, what we will do is make sure that there is a full complement of judges, which there is at this point in time. We've appointed eight in just

two years. They didn't all come in one go. We had to start appointing them as soon as we came in, because of the state that we were met with when we came.

We will continue to add FTEs. We have 13 FTEs for the Prosecution Service. Nine of those are Crowns. We will support those who are delivering justice in this province.

ZACH CHURCHILL: The Premier can reject the facts all he wants, but here are the facts: backlogs, 30 per cent more under this government's watch for homicide cases; 101 per cent increase in backlogs for sexual assault cases. These are the most violent criminals in our society, who aren't even seeing their day in court because they're not having a chance to be prosecuted. Prosecutors are crying for this government to help them out, to hire more prosecutors, to fill our staffing shortage so that criminals can, at the very least, be tried and our streets can be safer. My question to the Premier: Does he not recognize that the situation in Nova Scotia has gotten drastically worse under his watch?

THE PREMIER: We support those delivering justice in this province. We will continue to support them with investments. We will continue to support them with making sure there's a full complement of judges on the bench, which there is. We know there are five vacancies in the Crown service. FTEs are there, but there are vacancies. To say that we are not supplying with the investment is just fearmongering. It's just false. I completely reject it. We will be there to support those delivering justice, and I encourage the member opposite to get in line with us too.

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

PREM.: SENIORS - SUPPORT

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. It's increasingly common to see signs like the one outside of the Tim Hortons in Bridgewater recently, which read, "Senior couple, age 74 and 71, living in van for 5 weeks, need apartment and help." I'll table that.

That's because seniors in Nova Scotia are facing the brunt of the rising cost of living. Nearly one in ten live in poverty. This is the highest ratio among people 65 and older. The poverty rate among those folks remains two-thirds higher in Nova Scotia than the national average.

Last week, the Premier said he is open to better ways to support seniors. When is he going to do more?

THE PREMIER: This is an important question. We know the struggles that Nova Scotians across the spectrum are facing - and really across the country and North America. The cost of living crisis is really causing people to suffer. There's no question about that. The housing issues are a concern for us. We're investing in housing. We're investing in

seniors. Is there more work to be done? Of course there is. As long as there's a government, there'll be things for them to do in terms of investing in Nova Scotians. We'll continue to do that. We'll look for innovative ways to do that. I do encourage the members opposite. I know it's easy in Opposition to take a negative spin on everything, but there are people struggling, and we're trying to support those people.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: There is more to be done. In British Columbia, seniors receive an automatic payment of \$99 a month on top of OAS and GIS. In Ontario, up to \$83 a month, and that's going to increase next year. In the Yukon territory, seniors receive \$288 a month. In Newfoundland and Labrador, seniors receive up to \$505 a month. Here, seniors receive zero dollars a month automatically. They work their whole lives to contribute to our province.

When is the Premier going to make sure that Nova Scotia treats its seniors as well as every other province in this country?

THE PREMIER: In Nova Scotia, they have a Seniors Care Grant, which no other province has. It would be unfair - to use one word that comes to mind - to suggest that we on the government side are uninterested in the plight of our seniors. That is absolutely unfair to suggest that. That is why we will continue to invest in Nova Scotians each and every day. We will always want to do more, but we do what we can.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: So far, "what we can" is not enough. From a recent ad in the newspaper titled "Homeless on the Eastern Shore,": "Living accommodations desperately being sought in this area. I'm a retired senior on a pension and living in my old car as a home. Thus far, I have been unable to secure a small apartment or even a room to live in. If you know of anybody who can offer me a place to live, I would really appreciate hearing from you. I can pay a monthly rent in the range of \$400 to \$600 a month. If you can help in any way, please call me. Thank you." I'll table that ad.

Will the Premier please commit to closing the gap for seniors in Nova Scotia so that they can live with dignity?

THE PREMIER: We know the housing challenges that exist, for sure. That's why we have made the first investment that this province has made in 30 years - we made it under this government - in affordable housing. We know we have invested over \$300 million in housing issues in general: to support seniors, to support those who are unhoused, who are living rough, for sure. One thing I would say to the member is that it is really important that existing affordable housing stock be reserved for those who truly need it. I would ask everyone in a leadership position to do their part to make sure that affordable housing stock is used only by those who truly need it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

DOJ: COURT STAFF - HIRE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, the Premier said that there are only five vacancies left. Those vacancies have been there for close to two years now. If it takes this government two years to hire five people, how are they going to fully staff our justice system? Last week, the Minister of Justice seemed to indicate that it was actually the federal government's responsibility, and that's why serious crimes and serious criminals were going free in our province. Guess what? It's the provincial Crowns who actually staff those federal courts. While it's the feds' job to appoint the judges in federal courts, it's the Province's job to staff and run the courts.

I'd like to ask the Premier: Does he think part of the problem of why we're seeing this backlog is because his own minister won't take responsibility in hiring these staff?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Thank you to the Leader of the Official Opposition, who must have been asleep the other day when I did point out to him that - and I thought it was loud. Maybe it wasn't loud enough, or maybe he wasn't listening. I'm not quite sure. But I did point out that in this year's budget, we did put \$800,000 to hire seven new Crowns. We have the intent to even have additional Crowns coming forward in this year's budget.

We're aware of the challenges. We're not the only province across this country that's having challenges with recruiting people for Crowns for PPS and other things throughout Justice.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Here's who's not sleeping well: the victims of criminals who aren't being prosecuted; parents who are worried their kids are going to be in jeopardy; people living on the street who are subject to violent criminals going free because this Attorney General won't see that they're prosecuted in our courts. That's who's not sleeping well at night.

Here's the reality. The government can brag all they want about spending money. That seems to be their go-to - look how much we're spending here, look how much we're spending there - when the outcomes are getting worse. Backlogs in homicide cases increasing, backlogs in sexual assault cases increasing. Does the minister not think we need a little more attention to this than just these flippant answers we're getting in the House from him?

BRAD JOHNS: Once again, it goes to show the ignorance of the . . . (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order. I think we are all using words in here in the last couple of minutes that we know are better not to be used. I would ask that you retract that statement and begin.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, I have no problem retracting the word, but I would like to ask for a clarification on the definition of the word, and whether or not it was appropriate or not. I think it was. I'd ask you to do that, but I will retract it for this, and use the word "uneducated." Can I use that word?

THE SPEAKER: You may use the word "uneducated," but have you retracted the other word?

BRAD JOHNS: Yes, I did.

THE SPEAKER: You have. Okay. Please proceed.

BRAD JOHNS: As I said, may not be educated in regard to how the court systems work.

Once again, what I will say is that whether a case is prosecuted or not is not up to the Attorney General of the Province of Nova Scotia. It's at an arm's length. It's dealt with by the Crown and the prosecutors. That's judicial, and they have some independence from government.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

DOJ: FED. VS. PROV. PROSECUTIONS - CLARIFY

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Speaker, I was paying attention very closely yesterday when the minister said, "I would say the member" - being the Leader of the Opposition - "almost seems to make it sound like it's the worst of the worst. Typically, that would be a federal" - and I'll table that. That's what the minister said.

For some education here, the minister is conflating two issues. Even though there are federal offenses at the Canada criminal court, which is the prosecution? Which prosecutors are prosecuting for murder? For sexual assault? For violent crime? That's the question for the Minister of Justice today.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, it wasn't yesterday. It was actually Friday.

The next thing I would say is that the federal courts have prosecutors as well.

IAIN RANKIN: Is it the Minister of Justice of Nova Scotia's contention that there are federal prosecutors dealing with violent crime in this province? Yes or no?

BRAD JOHNS: No, it's provincial, but federal have prosecutors as well.

[2:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect on a new question.

DOJ: PROSECUTIONS STAFF - INCREASE

HON. IAIN RANKIN: We are talking about violent crime today, which is what we were talking about on Friday. We are not talking about the type of prosecution by the federal government that has to do with fisheries or tax law. Let's stay focused.

My question is: With the neighbouring province of New Brunswick facing similar issues, they have added a 50 per cent increase to their Crown staff. That is 30 new positions - not vacancies - on top of the vacancies they will be filling. Can the minister defend not adding this kind of scale of support to keep criminals off the streets?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: We did increase the number of Crown attorneys last year by seven. We recently asked for a report from the Director of Public Prosecutions, which has come to us. It has identified that there is a backlog and a need for Crown prosecutors. As I said previously, we are looking at increasing that number in the upcoming budget.

IAIN RANKIN: New Brunswick is adding four times the number, and now you're looking for a report from a director you just hired for a position that was vacant for 1.5 years. That's an acting director position. Just a minute ago, you said you had nothing to do with it because of independence. My question is: Why did it take 1.5 years to fill the very important position of the director - the head of the public prosecution - to start to prioritize these very serious offenses?

BRAD JOHNS: The decisions of the Crown prosecutors are independent from government. The funding for that does come through the government so we do work around the operations but not around the courts.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ANSA: DISMANTLING RACISM AND HATE ACT - CONSULT

SUZY HANSEN: I'm honoured to rise this afternoon and pose the first question to Nova Scotia's first Black woman Cabinet Minister, the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs. This government made a legal commitment in the historic Dismantling Racism and Hate Act that African Nova Scotian communities would be consulted on matters that impact them. The government committed to actions and initiatives identified through community engagement that recognized the unique history and contributions of African Nova Scotians and the impact of systemic anti-Black hate, inequity, and racism. My

question is: Can the minister tell us how she is holding her government to this incredibly important commitment?

HON. TWILA GROSSE: the government has made a commitment, as you know, that legislation would go through an equity lens in the Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy. The office is working right now on that as a very important tool in terms of implementing it. That tool should be ready by next week. You can be assured that I am very much aware of the fact that we will look at these situations that affect the African Nova Scotian community.

SUZY HANSEN: I'm so grateful to hear that we will be examining things through an equitable lens, which should be what we're looking at all pieces of legislation through. Maybe we need to halt some pieces of legislation for us to do that work.

People in our African Nova Scotian communities are fighting all the time and have been for decades. The minister understands that. They've been fighting to be heard and respected. How is the minister going to make sure her government does not overreach and ride roughshod over decades of community planning to protect historic African Nova Scotian communities?

TWILA GROSSE: I think our government is going to ensure - I'm here now, so I'm going to ensure - that these things are looked at, that these things are taken care of, that we are consulted, that we are informed, that we have a say, that we are involved in these decisions that are made. We do have the anti-racism strategy and we will be working with that as we move that forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

DOJ: CASES THROWN OUT - EXPLAIN

HON. IAIN RANKIN: The number of cases being thrown out is getting out of control. There were never more than four in previous years. After this government took over, there were seven last year. Now it's reported as 15 and that's in the middle of the Summer. My question to the minister is: Given that they waited for months to fill the judges after they spoke out, given that Legal Aid's budget has been frozen the whole time, tying up resources, and given that now Crown prosecutors are begging for more support to ensure that they can actually try these criminals, my question to the minister is: Given that this is 15 in July, can the minister report if there have been any more cases thrown out since those 15 reported in the Summer?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Not that I am aware of. You'll have to check with the judiciary and the PPS. I'll do that and I can get back to the member.

IAIN RANKIN: I would think that the Minister of Justice would have some more serious attention to this issue. That's 15 so far this year. That is almost the entirety of what happened under the previous eight years in our government, and that's just half a year.

I'll table that we know at that time that there are seven cases pending. Seven cases are being considered right now for being thrown out, Speaker. I expect the Minister of Justice to show some attention to this very serious issue.

My question to the Minister of Justice is: Will he report back to the House this session how many more cases are being thrown out?

BRAD JOHNS: As I just previously said, I certainly will. I would also point out to the member that Jordan cases and decisions being thrown out are not unique to the Province of Nova Scotia. Jordan is relatively new. It's something that Crowns and legal systems across this country are facing but I will certainly report back as to the exact number.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

MAH: RENT SUPPLEMENTS DECISIONS - REVERSE

BRAEDON CLARK: We have learned this month that once again this government has made the conditions and requirements to get rent supplements more difficult for those who need them most. After cutting the program to change income requirements from 30 per cent to 50 per cent, we now know that there are also requirements for proof of income for a lease, which was not necessary in the past.

As we know, many of those who are applying for rent supplements are some of the most vulnerable Nova Scotians, who may not have easy access to those documents and to that work and this causes more barriers for those who are already struggling to make ends meet.

My question to the minister is: Will he reverse the decisions to make sure that rent supplements are more accessible for the Nova Scotians who need them most?

HON. JOHN LOHR: We have probably one of the most successful rent supplement programs in the country and we've tripled our investment. We are now investing close to \$50 million, of which \$42 million is ours. We have an incredibly successful rent supplement program compared to other provinces, which, as I've said before in this House, they can't spend the money but their portals are obviously not accessible.

We're doing an incredible amount in rent supplements. I'm very proud of that. What the member is referring to is an effort to tighten up the application process to be more in line with other programs in terms of proof of lease and proof of income.

BRAEDON CLARK: Speaking of proof of income, if you go to Page 36 of the Housing Needs Assessment, which was released in the last couple of weeks, you'll see that the average income for a rent supplement recipient is \$15,816 a year, so I have a hard time accepting the minister's argument that the rent supplement program is working extremely well when Nova Scotians who are making less than \$16,000 a year and might be spending 48 per cent of their income on housing are no longer eligible. I would ask the minister: When will he make changes to the program so that we can help the most vulnerable Nova Scotians, who in many cases are living on \$16,000 a year?

[2:45 p.m.]

JOHN LOHR: Not only have we tripled our investment in it, we've doubled the number of people who are receiving rent supplements to almost 8,000. We are projecting that number to continue to grow. We will continue to invest in this space. We realize the urgent need for it, and we're working hard to make that happen. We care about every Nova Scotian, especially those who need rent supplements. We're working to make that successful for them. We have made changes in the program requirements just to do due diligence to protect - as our responsibility as a government to manage government money.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West, joining us virtually. Please go ahead.

MAH: HOUSING STRATEGY CLAIM - EXPLAIN

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: We know that seniors are facing extreme challenges right now during this cost of living crisis. Seniors on fixed incomes are not able to make ends meet. They have to choose between prescriptions, groceries, and paying rent or mortgage. However, this government has used the Seniors Care Grant, which the Premier just spoke about, as a key pillar of the housing strategy, even though seniors can't use it to pay rent or a mortgage.

My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: How is the Seniors Care Grant going to help this minister build more housing?

HON. JOHN LOHR: We know that seniors are finding it tough in the province. We have a number of programs for seniors. We have increased funding into the home repair programs. We've done many different things. When we put out our housing strategy, this was a cross-government strategy where we asked other departments to contribute. We appreciate all the things that my colleague in the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care has done. I would suggest she is one of the most successful Seniors and Long-term Care ministers in the country, and we really respect the incredible build program she is on in Seniors and Long-term Care. This was a reference to the fact that we are contributing to seniors. We are concerned about them.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I'm really confused. Is the Seniors Care Grant under Seniors or under Housing? That's one. While the Seniors Care Grant may help seniors in other aspects of daily life, one thing it does not help with is seniors struggling to pay for a roof over their heads. More should be done for seniors, and it just does not make sense that this should be under Housing right now when they cannot pay for rent or mortgage. I hope the minister can clarify this: Has he invested any money to help seniors find housing? That's the answer that I want to hear. Did he invest any money for the seniors?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: On the question of whether we're investing in housing for seniors, we're building 3,500 nursing home beds in 34 new nursing homes across the province. I want to explain the Seniors Care Grant. When the Premier asked for a Seniors Care Grant, he said, "Who should we give it to?" We decided on frailty levels 4 and 5. Those are seniors who want to stay in their own home, who have trouble with mobility issues, starting to use a cane or a walker. This allows them to hire someone to do the yard work, lawn maintenance, snow shovelling. It applies to their power, it applies to their cell phone bill. Whatever they save that \$750 on, it will also allow them to use \$750 on something else.

THE SPEAKER: Just before we proceed, just a friendly reminder, no phones and no eating in the Chamber, please.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DCS: WINTER HOUSING - PLAN

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Community Services. Last night, temperatures dipped to zero degrees, and there is snow forecast in many parts of the province this week. We don't know where a Winter shelter will be in HRM, but we do know that it will only be 50 beds, not nearly enough to meet the needs of the hundreds of people facing Winter outdoors. Living outside in the Winter can be deadly. Why hasn't this government put forward a plan to house every person in HRM this Winter?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister for Community Services.

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: Thank you to the member for the question. We recognize the urgency of temperatures dropping and homelessness here in the province - certainly here in HRM, but also across the province. Absolutely, we are working hard with our partners, with HRM, to secure a location for this shelter. I also will take the opportunity to talk about the Pallet shelters that will be coming, 200 of them for across the province: 100 of them for here in HRM, as well as 100 more for the rest of Nova Scotia.

We know the urgency, we sense it. We're continuing to work with our partners, we know there's more to do, and we'll continue to do what we can.

[2:30 p.m.]

SUSAN LEBLANC: Let's do the math here. We've got 50 beds in a shelter. We've got 100 Pallet shelters somewhere else. Since this government was elected two years ago, the number of chronically homeless people in HRM alone has more than doubled as a result of its housing policies. There are now more than 1,000 people actively homeless in HRM, many of them in Dartmouth.

The minister is referencing a number of things: sheds, tiny homes, shelters. They do not add up to a warm place indoors for every single person who needs one. When will the minister guarantee a roof for every person living outside this winter in Nova Scotia?

TREVOR BOUDREAU: We recognize that everyone deserves a safe place to live. Over the past two years, this government has made significant investments in supporting people who are experiencing homelessness. I think of a couple of innovative projects, including The Bridge, that has been quite successful, and The Overlook. Again, we have talked about the Pallet shelters as well as the tiny homes.

Just for some perspective: Over the last two years, 417 new supportive housing units have been created by this government. We know there's more to do - we do know there's more to do, and we'll continue to do what we can to support our most vulnerable.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

DCS: PALLET SHELTERS - COMMIT

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I'll continue on the same theme. Right before the House session, we learned that this government was going to bring in 100 Pallet shelters to the HRM, but they will not be here until January. My question to the Minister of Community Services: Can he confirm when these Pallet shelters will be here - the exact date? When will they be arriving in HRM?

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: We're very excited about this program and looking at how we can support some of our most vulnerable people. Again, 200 Pallet shelters have been ordered. Our understanding from having conversations with Pallet, who creates these shelters, is that there is about a nine-week turnaround. We ordered them several weeks ago, so we anticipate them being delivered well before January. We're working hard with our service providers and with municipalities to get that land ready so we can have those shelters up quickly as soon as we do get them.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Shelter is needed now. We need to look outside the box and use the resources in our community. Our struggling church halls and community centres could be something that we could be using now while we're waiting for these things. We have over 1,000 people actively experiencing homelessness in HRM alone.

Shelters are overflowing, and we know that people in the HRM and all around the province need help.

My question to the minister is: Where are people who need the shelter this winter supposed to go, and will he actually look at our empty church halls and community centres as a temporary solution to this?

TREVOR BOUDREAU: We are constantly in conversations with municipalities, with service providers, with organizations who are interested in supporting some of our most vulnerable people. Again, we commit to looking at all options. I will say we're very grateful to HRM, who are working with us on looking at shelters and supports. They have said that they would commit to a community centre if need be, but we are very focused on getting our shelters up and going. As soon as we can, we'll announce the times and dates of when that will happen.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

DCS: PALLET SHELTERS LOCATION - SPECIFY

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: It's been three weeks now, and we still don't know where 100 shelters will be going. We need housing across the province. We don't know where these 100 shelters that were promised - outside of HRM - are going. When I first asked the Minister of Community Services, he couldn't give me an answer.

I'll ask him again today: Where are these 100 shelters going to be outside of HRM?

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: There is work under way with service providers across the province to understand who is available for support and where these supports can go. I can think of the Cape Breton Community Housing Association, which we're working with in CBRM, and we're working with organizations in Kentville and other organizations in the province. We are engaged with our community members across the province, and we'll continue to do so to have those places and spaces ready for when those shelters do arrive in December.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: We hear the challenges across the province when it comes to homelessness and the challenges around helping our most vulnerable. It's been a few weeks since the announcement was made. I have organizations in the CBRM - and there are other organizations across Cape Breton Island - reaching out and asking where these shelters are going to be. I'm sure MLAs in other parts of the province are hearing it from stakeholders in their communities as well.

My question to the minister is: Winter is here, and these 100 shelters matter to communities right across the province. Can he provide us with a timeline and a definitive date when these communities can find out whether they're going to have shelters or not?

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Here in our government, we sense the urgency too. We know these 100 shelters are very important to Nova Scotians who are experiencing homelessness. We're working very hard with our service providers across the province, here in HRM, and in CBRM. When those timelines can be definitive, and once we have all that sorted out, we'll let members know of those timelines. We're working as hard as we can, and we're going to continue to do what we can to support our most vulnerable.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

DHW: PARAMEDIC SERVICES REMOVED - EXPLAIN

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: So many Nova Scotians are struggling with access to health care services. My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The government is about to take a huge step backwards on access to care in Cumberland County. As of November 30th, EHS paramedics will no longer be providing care at North Cumberland Memorial Hospital, meaning the facility will no longer be a collaborative care centre. I will table the document outlining this. With the lack of daytime physician coverage at the emergency department in Pugwash, this change is yet another downgrade to services and access for the people.

Will the Minister of Health and Wellness please tell this House why services are being removed from North Cumberland just as the multi-million-dollar new hospital is about to open?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We have had some significant challenges, as everyone knows, around recruitment. We continue to work in Cumberland and Colchester Counties, in the Northern Zone, around recruitment for physicians and nurse practitioners, in particular, to deliver services. That recruitment effort is ongoing. We have two physician recruiters in that zone who are helping us and helping settle. We continue to look at ways in which we can grow our own workforce and how we can bring people to this province. We will continue to do that.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I didn't hear an answer from the minister, and I know the people of the Oxford, Pugwash, Wallace, and Wentworth areas would like to have an answer on what is the plan for this hospital. There has been no community consultation done with the people. The paramedics have provided outstanding service. There is a huge mine - Pugwash salt mine - in Pugwash. There absolutely needs to be a 24-hour emergency department in that community with that huge industry. This is a downgrade, and I think the people of Cumberland North - and all of Cumberland County, for that matter - deserve an answer from the minister.

What is the plan for the new hospital in Pugwash?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly we know that there have been some challenges around staffing. There has been some recent loss of physicians in that community and surrounding area, which has been very difficult. I send sympathies to the families and to the staff who work with those physicians.

The member for Cumberland South and I have been working very hard. We're in the community on a regular basis, working with Nova Scotia Health to understand the needs of the communities, working with EHS, working with primary care, working with the hospital administration to understand how best to serve and to support folks. Recruitment definitely is an important part. I know I continue to go up very regularly with the member for Cumberland South to visit and to understand the needs of health care workers and community members.

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

DCS: MODULAR CRISIS SHELTERS - PRODUCE

KENDRA COOMBES: My question is for the Minister of Community Services, about this Winter in Cape Breton. Recently, this government announced a \$7.5 million purchase of modular crisis shelters. It is still unclear how many of these will be available before Winter sets in, and how many will be in non-HRM areas like CBRM.

Some local companies have stated that they would have been able to locally build these shelters cheaper and faster, but this government instead awarded this untendered contract to an American company. I'll table that.

Nova Scotians deserve transparency. When and where will we see these shelters, and why was this contract so secretive?

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: Again, we feel the urgency. We know Winter's coming. Cold weather is here. The Pallet shelters are one tool that we're using to support Nova Scotians. I'm really proud of this government's unique initiative here. We are trying new things. We are engaged with other organizations here in the province that are interested in these types of initiatives. Pallet is a world leader in this type of initiative. We're working with them to support Nova Scotians to the best of our ability, and people experiencing homelessness.

Again, we are working on those timelines. We're working with organizations across the province, including in the CBRM. We are working hard to get those shelters in place as quickly as possible.

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, last year we stood here in October and we said Winter was coming. This government had a whole year to prepare for the next Winter, and we still don't have a full-fledged plan.

Many people across CBRM are currently living rough in tents, cars, and outdoors, but there are only 28 provincially funded shelter beds in Cape Breton, and this government's plans for new overnight shelters completely excludes the region. Even if 100 shelters came to CBRM it would not be enough, because at last count there were 300 actively homeless people in CBRM. This number is certainly getting higher.

Yes or no: Can this government guarantee that every person in Cape Breton has a roof this Winter?

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Again, I'll reiterate it over and over and over again: We as a government feel the urgency. We know how important it is to support our most vulnerable. We'll continue to support people who are living homeless or experiencing homelessness to the best of our ability.

We're very excited about those 100 Pallet shelters going across the province and the 100 here for HRM. We'll continue to work with service providers across the province to make sure that we're supporting those people who are in desperate need of housing. We'll continue to do the best that we can.

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

ACSW: SHELTER FOR WOMEN - CREATE

LORELEI NICOLL: As we brought to this House last week, we know that Bryony House has had to give an eviction notice to the current residents in the shelter, and that they have an ever-growing wait-list.

My question to the Minister of Community Services: Is the government going to open a new shelter for women escaping domestic violence while other shelters now are over capacity? Does the minister feel the urgency for these women?

HON. JILL BALSER: Of course, women fleeing domestic violence remain in our hearts and our minds when we're thinking about the struggles that they're going through. As the minister has indicated, we're working really hard with all of our community partners in making sure that those who are most vulnerable have a place to stay and have a roof over their head in those situations where they need it most. I know the minister has mentioned many different things that are happening. I'm very encouraged by working closely with him to make sure that the most vulnerable in our province are protected this year.

LORELEI NICOLL: We've seen the news out of Sault Ste. Marie this week where, tragically, five victims, including three children, were murdered due to intimate partner violence. Sault Ste. Marie wants to declare domestic violence as an epidemic, and we need to support our victims who are facing homelessness when trying to leave an abusive

situation. My question to the Minister of Community Services is: Will any of the new shelters this government has committed to be specifically for those fleeing domestic violence?

[2:45 p.m.]

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: Certainly, we recognize people who are homeless or are experiencing homelessness for a variety of reasons. We are certainly doing what we can, and we will continue to support the sector to the best of our ability.

We are diligently working with HRM to secure a location for our Winter shelter. We continue to look at other options as well, to support people who are experiencing homelessness. We'll continue to do what we can.

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

NRR: COM. LAND TRUST APPLIC. - UPDATE

HON. BEN JESSOME: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. The Community Land Trust in Upper Hammonds Plains has made an application for a piece of Crown land so that they can enter into the community development that is going on in their community. My question to the minister is: Can the minister provide an update on the request that was made this Summer?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: This past Spring and Summer were certainly devastating for the member's area and the area of the member for Shelburne. We entertain the conversation on many fronts to learn from those issues that we saw this past Spring, and exits and entry points into communities.

There's nothing at my desk as of yet. I know there are some applications and conversations going on. I'd love to give the member the proper update, but it's not at my desk as of yet. I do want to let the member's residents know that there's a willingness here from this government to make a safe area in communities, as we did learn from the experiences of this past Spring and Summer.

BEN JESSOME: Just to clarify, through the Speaker, this is an organization that was established to respond to the gentrification that's happening in Upper Hammonds Plains. They have come together as a community. They have done some work with HRM around zoning and protecting the cultural, historic integrity of that community.

They've made an application specific for a piece of Crown land so that they can become part of the community development that's taking place - not specific to egress or connectivity or emergency access, but to develop affordable housing for the community of Upper Hammonds Plains.

TONY RUSHTON: It certainly was about that aspect as well, but further conversation after the fact. It did evolve into further discussion on how this could be evolved. I do know that it's with the department. It hasn't made it to my desk yet. I'm looking forward to that. Certainly, as soon as we do have that information, I look forward to sharing that with the member across, and sharing it with the community. All different communities throughout Nova Scotia can evolve with their own heritage and their own cultures, and make Nova Scotia that much richer in our heritage and culture.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Speaker, it doesn't matter where we sit in this House or what our political stripes are, one thing that connects each and every one of us in this House is the fact that we all have family and loved ones back at home. For many of us, the time that we spend away from home - whether it be two, three or four days a week here in the city - is a big personal sacrifice. It's been said that family isn't an important thing; it's everything.

Today in your gallery, I'm very honoured to welcome two very special people in my family. I'm very honoured to welcome my mom Odette, and my grandmother Donna. I have to say that without their love and support from Day 1, not only would I not have this seat, but I would not be where I am in life today. I want to recognize these two very special people in my life whom I love tremendously. Vous aimez, mamans. I ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming them. (Standing ovation)

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Queens on an introduction.

HON. KIM MASLAND: In the East Gallery today, we have Jamie Dawson joining us. Last Spring, Queens County became the new home for Jamie and Dr. Asha Dawson. The Dawsons moved from Scotland, and Asha is now a family physician in the Queens General Hospital Collaborative Care Clinic. The Dawsons have totally immersed themselves in the community. They are so loved and appreciated, and now I have Jamie as one of my part-time constituency assistants.

It's truly my privilege to introduce Jamie here today to the Legislature, and to officially welcome him and Asha to Nova Scotia. Our beautiful province is certainly much richer because of both of you, so thank you so much. (Applause)

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Argyle on an introduction.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Since we're on a roll, I do want to recognize four members from my team at the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions,

specifically with the Digital Culture Strategy and Performance Team. In the East Gallery, Krista Spurr - I'd ask that you rise to receive the warm welcome of the House - Katie Chambers, Elky Hanlon, and Hillary MacEachern. Thanks for coming up to the House today, and thanks for your hard work on behalf of all Nova Scotians.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: I will now leave the Chair and we'll take just a few moments to set up for Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[2:53 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Nolan Young in the Chair.]

[11:20 p.m. CW 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).

with certain amendments and the Chair has been instructed to recommend this bill to the favourable consideration of the House.

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that the bill be read again a third time at a future day.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: I ask that you call government bills for third - no, just joking. (Laughter) Speaker, that concludes government business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on November 1st between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. Tomorrow is NDP Opposition Day, so I'll turn the floor over to my honourable colleague to call business for the day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Tomorrow we will have second reading of Bill Nos. 391, 363 and 342.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that we now rise and meet again tomorrow between the hours of 1:00 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 11:21 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 764**

By: Gary Burrill (Halifax Chebucto)

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

Whereas Andrew Thorne competed at the 10th International Abilympics in Metz, France, in March; and

Whereas Andrew Thorne, competing with Liam Crane, received the Bronze Medal in Team Cooking; and

Whereas Andrew Thorne has brought his skills, enthusiasm, and baked goods to the Prescott Group community for 18 years;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Andrew on his achievement, and we hope we all get to taste his chocolate cake.

RESOLUTION NO. 765

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas The Links at Brunello is an 18-hole award-winning golf course in Timberlea, Nova Scotia, which offers memorable views and spectacular fairways; and

Whereas the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) helped Indigenous athletes realize the collective potential of their bodies, minds, and spirits by bringing together 756 Indigenous nations to celebrate, share, and reconnect through sport and culture in Halifax and Dartmouth in 2023; and

Whereas NAIG 2023 was able to showcase the very best of North America's Indigenous athletes;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating The Links at Brunello for their warm hospitality to host the NAIG 2023 golf competitions and to participate in NAIG's mission to improve the quality of life for Indigenous peoples by supporting self-determined sports and cultural activities.

RESOLUTION NO. 766

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Jeffrey Connors graduated as a volunteer firefighter in March 2023 to serve Station 54 in Hatchet Lake; and

Whereas this past year our province experienced devastating and unprecedented wildfires that changed the lives of so many Nova Scotians who had to be evacuated from their communities and many who lost everything; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are not paid for responding to emergency calls and become our hometown heroes as they work to put out fires, stop the spread of fires, and administer first aid to people with injuries, and the demands and commitment of a volunteer firefighter require an important level of dedication and responsibility, lifting heavy objects, staying physically fit, and being prepared to give up some of your free time to be on call are all part of the job;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly to join me in thanking Jeffrey for his courage to provide this essential and potentially life-saving volunteer work for our community and for supporting people who may be experiencing fear and loss.

RESOLUTION NO. 767

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas on Dec 31, 2022, Robert Murphy retired from the IWK Health Centre after 30 years of dedicated service as the plant engineer overseeing the performance and continued maintenance of the electrical and mechanical systems to operate the IWK Health Centre; and

Whereas just prior to his retirement, he served as maintenance supervisor and chief engineer for two years and was well known and admired by IWK staff for his commitment to his work and support to his colleagues; and

Whereas 25 years ago, Robert helped establish the committee “Village Green” in East Dover, a committee that created the Village Green Park, which includes a community park, ball field, and playground, and volunteered to help save East Dover’s Community Hall, known as The Glen;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Robert for his strong work ethic, community engagement, and compassion for helping family, friends, and neighbours in need.