



House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia

## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Karla MacFarlane**

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### First Session

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2023**

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**HALIFAX, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2023**

**Sixty-fourth General Assembly**

**First Session**

**9:00 A.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Karla MacFarlane

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Lisa Lachance, Danielle Barkhouse, Nolan Young

THE SPEAKER: Order. Good morning. We'll start with the daily routine.

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. GREG MORROW: Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a pair of annual reports for the Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

THE SPEAKER: The reports are tabled.

Any further tabling of reports, regulations, and other papers?

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Yesterday during Question Period, the Opposition asked a couple of questions. I said I would table the answers for that, so I'll table these answers for their benefit and for the benefit of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The paper is tabled.

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

### **GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 794**

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

Whereas the Taste of Nova Scotia Awards are presented annually to recognize and celebrate Nova Scotia's culinary leaders; and

Whereas Afashionado Fishmongers of Halifax received the 2023 Taste of Nova Scotia Product of the Year Award on October 26<sup>th</sup> for their smoked salmon; and

Whereas this achievement speaks to the hard work done by the company and its suppliers and highlights the quality of our Nova Scotia seafood;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating everyone involved with Afashionado Fishmongers on this award and making it a priority to enjoy some delicious Nova Scotia seafood very soon.

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 Advanced Education.

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

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

BRIAN WONG: Speaker, in your gallery we have some individuals from Nova Scotia Community College's Construction Fundamentals program, which introduces students to a variety of skilled trades careers and apprenticeship while also allowing students to give back to their community.

Joining us today, we have Adam Bartlett, NSCC Academic Chair of Trades and Transportation, Akerley Campus; we have Josh Boulton, NSCC Construction Fundamentals program faculty member; and Ryan Rhodenizer, a graduate of the program.

What make this program truly special is that it gives back to the community. This Summer, students in this program developed their trades skills by building an accessibility ramp at the home of a veteran who now lives with Huntington disease.

On that note, Speaker, I also want to introduce this veteran so that this House can thank him for his service to our country. Brad Carmichael was a reservist in the 36 Combat Engineer Regiment from 2010 to 2018. He is joined here today by his mother, Peggy Carmichael Mastin and his aunt Nancy Barteaux.

I ask that all members in the Legislature rise and applaud Brad Carmichael for his years of service. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. It's such an honour to have you here to join us.

The honourable Minister of Advanced Education.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 795**

HON. BRIAN WONG: With that, Speaker, I'll move on to read the notice of motion.

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

Whereas Nova Scotia Community College's Construction Fundamentals program is introducing students to a variety of skilled trades careers while also allowing students to give back to the community; and

Whereas this Summer, students enrolled in this program at the Akerley Campus spent four days building an accessibility ramp at the home of Brad Carmichael, a reservist who now lives with Huntington disease; and

Whereas this free eight-week program not only taught students skills in construction but how to put them to good use to support a Nova Scotia neighbour in the truest Bluenoser fashion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature join in applauding these students, along with the partnership between Nova Scotia Community College, the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, and the Construction Association of Nova Scotia, who put this program together.

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 Agriculture.

HON. GREG MORROW: Thank you, Speaker. I beg leave to make an introduction before I read my notice of motion.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

GREG MORROW: Speaker, in the gallery, joining us today from the Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission, I welcome guests John Vissers, the chair, all the way from the big city of Stewiacke joining us this morning; Alicia Parsons Lushington, a long-time employee of the board; Nick Bell, director; and Jen Thompson, executive director for the Department of Agriculture risk management in lending.

I'd ask you to stand and accept the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)



THE SPEAKER: Welcome.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**RESOLUTION NO. 796**

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

Whereas the Crop Insurance Act, now known as the Crop and Livestock Insurance Act, began supporting farmers 55 years ago, in 1968; and

Whereas the Act is administered by the Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission, whose board and staff have worked to bring reliable peace of mind to farmers throughout the province for decades; and

Whereas the commission provides broad coverage, with 18 plans of insurance for 57 types of crop and livestock, and continues to ensure necessary coverage when small businesses need it the most, with an insurance value of more than \$260 million;

Therefore, be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating the board and staff of the Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission on their 55<sup>th</sup> year of supporting the agricultural sector here in Nova Scotia.

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 African Nova Scotian Affairs.

**RESOLUTION NO. 797**

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

Whereas the Canada International Black Women Excellence organization, based in Ontario, supports and celebrates Black women and the achievements they have made in Canada and beyond by nominating Black women for Canada's Top 100 Black Women to Watch each year; and

Whereas Ms. Tia Upshaw, the CEO of Blk Women in Excellence in Nova Scotia, has been awarded the Top 100 Black Women to Watch award for her exceptional work empowering and uplifting many female entrepreneurs in and beyond our community; and

Whereas Ms. Wyndolyn Brown has received the prestigious Top 100 Black Women in Canada award for her dedication as the CEO of Empowerment for Hope and providing crucial resources and support, helping families thrive, and putting an end to the cycle of violence and silence that has affected so many people;

Therefore, be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly join me in expressing heartfelt gratitude and extending our warmest congratulations to these two extraordinary women, Ms. Upshaw and Ms. Brown, for their well-deserved Top 100 Black Women in Canada awards and thanking them for their commitment to engaging and empowering women in Nova Scotia, which greatly enriches our communities.

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 Agriculture.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 798**

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

Whereas yesterday, den Haan Greenhouses was recognized for their excellent local produce and leadership in agri-food innovation, receiving the 2023 Taste of Nova Scotia Producer of the Year award; and

Whereas this family-run business in the Annapolis Valley has grown through three generations, become a team of 50 employees, and is committed to excellence and quality, food safety, and protecting the environment while also supporting the community by contributing generously to Feed Nova Scotia; and

Whereas their fresh cucumbers can be enjoyed year-round now thanks to their innovative decision to install LED lights in their greenhouses, giving Nova Scotians continuous access to fresh, locally grown produce;

Therefore, be it resolved that all members of this House join me in congratulating the Taste of Nova Scotia Producer of the Year, den Haan Greenhouses, for their 60 years as an outstanding agricultural business in this province.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 397 - An Act to Eliminate Parking Fees at Hospitals. (Carman Kerr)**

**Bill No. 398 - An Act to Amend Chapter 380 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Public Utilities Act, Respecting Executive Compensation at Nova Scotia Power Incorporated. (Susan Leblanc)**

**Bill No. 399 - An Act to Provide a Fair Review of Nova Scotia's Workers' Compensation System. (Kendra Coombes)**

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

#### **NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

[9:15 a.m.]

### **RESOLUTION 799**

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

Whereas the Speaker and Deputy Speakers of this House are non-partisan positions and those occupying those positions must act in their roles with fairness, independence, and in full knowledge of and compliance with the long-established rules of this House; and

Whereas both actual partisan activity and perceived partisan activity of our Speakers and Deputy Speakers must be curtailed in order to preserve the legitimacy of representative democracy, and there is a precedent in this House by the current government of attempts to interfere in the independence of the Speaker; and

Whereas the MLA for Shelburne has appeared in partisan advertisements that have launched during a time that he occupies the Chair, the MLA for Shelburne has through measurable metrics that I will table reprimanded and demanded retractions from members of the Opposition demonstrably more than members of the government;

Therefore, be it resolved that this House reaffirms and reasserts the importance of the independence of the elected Speaker and Deputy Speakers of the House and the necessity of such members to refrain from engaging in partisan political activity that can impugn their credibility as independent, non-partisan arbiters of this House.

I would ask for waiver of notice and passage without debate.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

The honourable Premier.

### **RESOLUTION 800**

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): I'd like to table my own notice of motion.

Whereas the independence of the Chairs and Speakers and Deputy Speakers of this House is paramount to the functioning of the House; and

Whereas members should ask themselves: Where would this House be without somebody like a Speaker or a Deputy Speaker or a Chair to preside over proceedings in a fair and reasonable manner; and

Whereas earlier this week the Leader of the Opposition was found to have been challenging the Speakers and Chairs of this House unnecessarily and was made to apologize to the members of this House for his unparliamentary action;

Whereas the Leader of the Opposition continues to challenge the independence of the Chairs, I ask for all members of this...

THE SPEAKER: Order. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Speaker.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the importance of the responsibilities of the Chairs, Deputy Speakers, and Speaker of this House and agree to cease challenging them on every single ruling that they make.

I ask for waiver of notice and passage without debate.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

#### **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

#### **HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS PARISH: 200TH ANNIV. - RECOG.**

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: Today I would like to acknowledge the community of L'Ardoise and the Holy Guardian Angels Parish. On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, a celebration took place celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the parish. Holy Guardian Angels Parish became the ninth parish within the Diocese of Antigonish, with records dating back to 1823. Thanks to dedicated community members over the years, the church has been well-maintained and is considered a focal point in the community.

I would like to especially acknowledge Raymonde Burke. Raymonde was Richmond County's Volunteer of the Month for January this year. She is the chair of the

L'Ardoise Parish Council and was a member of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning committee. Raymonde is a loyal and dedicated volunteer in her community and is always willing to go above and beyond. Please join me in celebrating Raymonde Burke and the anniversary of the Holy Guardian Angels Parish in the beautiful community of L'Ardoise.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **PICTOU CO. FUEL FUND: HELP FOR FAMILIES - THANKS**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: As the cold weather begins, it reminds us all of the difficult choices that many Nova Scotians must face as they turn up the heat in their homes. I'd like to take this opportunity to speak about a group of people in Pictou County that has been helping those with an urgent need for more than 20 years.

Starting in just a few weeks, the Pictou County Fuel Fund will begin their work over the next six months to help families heat their homes. Last year the fund helped 374 families, more than a 40 per cent increase from the previous season. Their motto is: No one should go cold in Pictou County. The group, funded entirely by community donations, works hard to ensure their neighbours have a warm home each and every night.

As many Nova Scotians face tough decisions when paying the bills, particularly with higher rates to their power, I ask that all members join me in thanking organizations like the Pictou County Fuel Fund that help their fellow Nova Scotians get through the winter.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

### **GLG TENNIS PGM.: SUCCESS - RECOG.**

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to recognize the Girls Leading Girls tennis program. My girls have been involved in a number of sports, but none is like the Girls Leading Girls tennis program. The Girls Leading Girls program provides an environment for girls to develop a passion for tennis and a pathway to foster strong leadership skills. This program is led by Girls Leading Girls youth mentors and local certified coaches.

It's a girl-created program, hosted in a positive environment that is designed to encourage young girls to both play and stay in the sport of tennis. The program is led by Girls Leading Girls mentors, which in turn is exactly what their mission is - girls leading girls. I'd like all members to join me in congratulating the Girls Leading Girls program for their success. I thank them for inspiring young girls to become tennis phenoms like Venus and Serena and teaching them to be leaders in their community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**BROWN, CST. JEFF: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.**

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: A life of service to others should be celebrated. I rise today to honour retired Halifax Regional Police constable Jeff Brown. Jeff has been a dedicated HRP officer for 20 years. Prior to joining, he served with the Royal Canadian Navy. A majority of his policing career has been spent serving the residents of Dartmouth.

Since 2017, Jeff has been our community response officer, developing strong relationships with community members. Now that Constable Brown has retired, the community of Dartmouth East welcomes Constable Cody Schultz to the position.

Congratulations on your retirement, Jeff. On behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia and the residents of Dartmouth, thank you for your outstanding service and dedication to helping others. Christine, the children, and I are very grateful for your friendship and wish you all the best on the many new adventures that await you. All the best, my friend.

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

**HOCKEY VILLAGE ANCHORS: SUPPORT - THANKS**

LORELEI NICOLL: It takes a village to run a smooth sport team. I stand today to recognize and thank the hockey village anchors from the Cole Harbour Minor Hockey Association: the coaches, the unsung heroes of a well-run hockey team. They are the first ones to arrive and the last ones to leave after a game or practice. The manager, handling everything off the ice, the players, the reason the parents get up at 6:00 a.m. in the Winter before work. The parents, who are the glue that holds the team together, whether revolving carpools, early morning coffee runs, bringing the team post-game snacks - the parents are truly the oil that helps the machine run. The officials - referees, scorekeepers, and the Zamboni driver - the next time you want to argue a call, just think about how much they contribute to your child's sports experience. The fans - the Cole Harbour minor hockey parents are the biggest fans, cheering on their team whenever they hit the ice.

Thank you to all who continue to help and nurture the Cole Harbour minor hockey association and all the best this hockey season.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**COOPER, DR. MARIAH: JUSTICE RESEARCH - THANKS**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, Dartmouth North resident Dr. Mariah Cooper is a scholar of medieval gender and sexuality who focuses on medieval English sexual violence laws and trials. Her research focuses on the history of rape myths and victim-blaming.

In 2021, Mariah was featured on a CBC Radio *Ideas* episode about rape and romance in medieval England. In that interview, she told the CBC that we are living in the past when it comes to our current-day sexual assault laws and how society treats survivors. As a Ph.D. student, Mariah found that sexual assault trials in the 1200s and 1300s had a conviction rate of about 10 per cent. According to the CBC, in Canada between 2009 and 2014, around 12 per cent of reported sexual assault complaints resulted in convictions. Those numbers are much too close.

I ask the House to join me in thanking Dr. Cooper for her in-depth research into how the justice system treated and still treats survivors of sexual violence. In doing so, she has shown us how far we haven't come when it comes to sexual assault convictions and victim-blaming and has given us an opportunity to reflect and to do better.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**CAIN, VIOLA: FOSTER MOTHER SERV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. TWILA GROSSE: Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ms. Viola Cain, who resides in the community of North Preston.

Miss Vola, as she has been affectionately known, has been a foster mother to more than 150 children for nearly 50 years while officially adopting three of the children. Ms. Cain has received three Foster Mother of The Year awards, and in January 2023, she received Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal. Many of the children still call her Mum and visit her to this day. I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to please join me to thank and congratulate Ms. Cain for many years of being a foster mother.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West, who is joining us virtually.

**FILIPINO ASSOC. OF NS: SUMMER COM. PICNIC - THANKS**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I recently had the pleasure to connect with the local Filipino community at their Summer Community Picnic held at Fort Needham Memorial Park in the North End of Halifax, organized by the Filipino Association of Nova Scotia, known as FANS. It was wonderful to meet members and leaders of the Filipino community, including Consul Connie Lacson and President Helen Espino-Burchell, who has been serving in this capacity since earlier this year.

FANS has a long and rich history of serving our city's and province's Filipino diaspora since their humble beginning in the early 1960s. Thank you to FANS for allowing me and the Leader of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Yarmouth, to join you at all your community events. We both look forward to connecting again soon. I ask the



House to join me in thanking FANS for all they do in the community to support the growing Filipino community in Clayton Park West.

[9:30 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

**KIMBER, STEPHEN: ORDER OF N.S. - CONGRATS.**

GARY BURRILL: The House of Assembly congratulates Stephen Kimber on his upcoming induction to the Order of Nova Scotia. The author of two novels and 11 non-fiction works, Stephen Kimber is one of the most distinguished writers, journalists and educators in our province.

His work has appeared in most major Canadian publications, including *Canadian Geographic*, *Macleans*, *The Globe and Mail*, and the *Toronto Star*. His *Sailors, Slackers, and Blind Pigs: Halifax at War* is a seminal and engaging treatment of those defining years. His *Alexa!: Changing the Face of Canadian Politics* is an outstanding illustration of the political biographer's art.

A Professor of Journalism for more than 30 years at the University of King's College, Stephen Kimber has served three separate terms as Director of the King's School of Journalism and co-founded King's Masters of Fine Arts and Creative Non-Fiction degree program.

The Order of Nova Scotia - the highest honour of the Province of Nova Scotia - recognizes excellence, outstanding contributions, and achievements. Stephen Kimber is a fitting recipient of the Order.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

**OXFORD WILDCATS: CH'SHIP WIN - CONGRATS.**

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Hold on to your hat, because I am here to talk about the U15 Tier 1 Girls baseball team in Oxford. The Oxford Wildcats girls - as you recall, a few years ago, I had a few of these girls in the Legislative Assembly for a visit. Well, Speaker, that was their first provincial title - they're here to celebrate their third in a row. This team is dedicated and hard-working, and it paid off once again. Their coaches Jason Dickie, Lucas Porter, and Sam Porter led the team to victory again this year.

Team members include Lily Dickie, Grace Weatherbee, Emma Reade, Bella Porter, Julia Sharpe, Danica Hebert, Alora Adams, Calla McNally, Rhaya MacDonald, Alyx Chitty, and Kadance Smith.

Please join me in congratulating this dynasty baseball team on one more provincial championship.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**LEGION BRANCHES: POPPY SEASON - BEST WISHES**

FRED TILLEY: Speaker, November is a very important month in our lives as we remember veterans who have passed and who have fought for Canada. I just want to wish the four Legions in my district a great Remembrance season, and I look forward to sharing those ceremonies with you. To Branch 8, Sydney Mines; Branch 19, North Sydney; Branch 83 in Florence; and Branch 126 in Westmount, I hope you have a very successful poppy season and a great November. We will remember them.

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

**CASSIE + FRIENDS: MED. SUPPLIES HELP - THANKS**

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, when a family finds out that their child needs to receive specialist medical treatment, there will immediately be new worries, including how to afford the new, unwelcome expenses like trips to the hospital and at-home medical supplies.

The IWK Rheumatology Clinic has started a new initiative to alleviate some of this burden. IWK staff and families who run the Bluenose Marathon often do so in support of Cassie + Friends, a charity dedicated to supporting kids with rheumatic diseases and their families. The Rheumatology Clinic, with the help of Cassie + Friends, has stocked a resource cupboard with supplies like splints, numbing cream, dressings, and stretch bands. These items are free to whomever needs them, and they help keep the IWK's comfort promise to families that IWK Health will do everything possible to prevent and treat pain.

I ask that my colleagues in the House recognize the staff of the IWK Rheumatology Clinic, as well as Cassie + Friends, for their work in ensuring no patient or family goes without the medical supplies they need.

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

**COCHRANE FAMILY FARM: COC AWD. - CONGRATS.**

LARRY HARRISON: Speaker, I rise to recognize the Cochrane Family Farm in Upper Stewiacke. Frank Cochrane not only wanted to grow vegetables for himself but also for the community, and he also sells seeds so that other people can grow their own. Each day, Frank, his wife Lisa, and their children all work together to help grow that farm. If knocked down with tough times, and he has many - especially with damaging weather

lately - Frank and his family get back up and operate with what is left. For instance, Frank's daughter Julie sells baked goods, and I can attest that they are absolutely fantastic.

I am so pleased to say that on October 23, 2023, the Cochrane Family Farm was awarded the Agriculture Enterprise of the Year Award from the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce. I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the very deserving Cochrane family.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

**DEVT. COMM.: BANGOR SAWMILL PRESERV. - RECOG.**

RONNIE LEBLANC: Speaker, in Bangor we are proud to have the only operational water-powered sawmill in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, in early 2022 the museum's dam was damaged. One year later, Laura Maillet played a significant role in sparking interest in the future of the Moulin de Bangor. She began with a fundraising campaign, and later organized a community meeting that drew widespread participation.

Since then, the Commission de développement du moulin-musée de Bangor, the sawmill's owners, have elected a new board, effectively entrusting the site's care to a new generation. Their first fundraiser was a remarkable success, providing the necessary funds for dam repairs. They are now considering reopening the sawmill next year.

I invite all members to join me in applauding the Commission de développement du moulin-musée de Bangor and the Bangor community for their renewed commitment to preserving the moulin de Bangor.

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

**ORGS.: WHITNEY PIER CARIBBEAN FESTIVAL - THANKS**

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, on Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, the St. Philips African Orthodox Church's Caribbean Festival was held. The festival is extremely successful every year. People from all over the CBRM turn out for the chicken and rice dinner, fishcakes, Jamaican patties, sugar cakes, as well as Whitney Pier's famous hot sauce. This always drives the crowd to come. Everyone was well-fed and entertained by the games of chance and music. I want to thank all the organizers, volunteers and those who prepared all the food, and I want to tell them how much they make this community so very special. I thank them all so much.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

**DHAMIJA, SHIVANI: SHIVANI'S KITCHEN - RECOG.**

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Speaker, I would like to commend and recognize the hard work ethic of Shivani Dhamija of Shivani's Kitchen, established in 2014. When Shivani recognized a gap in supply of home-cooked Indian-style food in our community, she set out to change that. What began as home delivery evolved into cooking classes. Now you can find her products on shelves in the stores throughout Atlantic Canada and the United States.

Most impressive is Shivani's unwavering commitment to her dream. When COVID closed down her takeout restaurant at Seaport Market, that is when she came up with a plan to make food production her priority, and she opened a food production facility at the Station Food Hub in Newport Station - my former elementary school.

Not only has Shivani been successful in growing her own brand, she also prioritizes helping other entrepreneurs, proving that she is a true leader, role model and an incredible asset to our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**HANNAM, DEBBIE: VOL. AWD. RECIPIENT - RECOG.**

CARMAN KERR: Speaker, we are fortunate in Annapolis to have so many dedicated, compassionate volunteers who work tirelessly to make their community an even better place to work, live and play. Each year, a number of these amazing folks are celebrated at the Annapolis County Volunteer Event. One of these very deserving 2023 honourees was Debbie Hannam.

Debbie is a long-time community volunteer and has generously given her time and talent to several groups, including the Centrelea Hall, Bridgetown Band Parents Association, Girl Guides, Gordon Providence United Church, Annapolis County Learning Disabilities Association and the Annapolis/Kings Palliative Care group. She also recently received the Unsung Heroes Award from the Nova Scotia Health Authority. It is an award that celebrates exceptional individuals who quietly make a difference every day, through their work with Nova Scotia Health Authority.

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**VOLS.: AMHERST LITTLE LEAGUE - THANKS**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and thank many volunteers who each Summer dedicate their time to the Amherst Little League organization. Amherst Little League has been providing free baseball to children aged 4 to 12 since 1955. Over those 68 years, thousands of children have had the opportunity to experience good sportsmanship and friendship, with those friendships lasting long after Little League.

Thanks to generous corporate sponsors and hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours, Amherst Little League continues to set a great example in our community. The league is fortunate to operate three baseball diamonds and a new clubhouse, all located on the same grounds in the centre of Amherst. This past Summer's executive included President Mike LeBlanc, Vice President Steve Wells, Treasurer Mike King, and Secretary John Murray, as well as a long list of committee chairs, all of whom are totally committed to ensuring children learn the game of baseball.

Please join me in thanking the volunteers with Amherst Little League for their dedication to the youth of our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**NOCTURNE FESTIVAL 2023: SUCCESS - CONGRATS.**

SUZY HANSEN: On October 14<sup>th</sup>, I was pleased to attend an open reception for Nocturne 2023, hosted at the NATIONAL Public Relations office. We went on an hour-long tour to view a few key exhibits within that event. Nocturne at night is something everyone should experience.

Nocturne is an independent, free, contemporary art festival in Halifax presented by the Nocturne: Art at Night Society. The festival brings art and energy to the streets of our beautiful city, showcasing and celebrating the visual arts scene in Mi'kma'ki. Nocturne believes reconciliation is a responsibility of all Canadians, and as an organization, they're always looking for and finding ways to bring reconciliation into their practice and planning.

Some of the art at night highlights included Future Fragments. It was outside the Central Library, and they showcased a participatory installation that empowered Millbrook First Nation youth and community members to express their dreams for the future through mixed media art.

I'd like all members of this House to join me in congratulating Nocturne 2023 on a successful event this year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

**TUTTY, GREG: CURLING CLUB FUNDRAISING - RECOG.**

HON. KIM MASLAND: I rise today to acknowledge quizmaster Greg Tutty of Liverpool and his contribution to the ongoing fundraising efforts for the Liverpool Curling Club. A self-employed graphic designer, Greg is well-known in Queens for hosting trivia nights at various venues. Last June, he began the tradition of Quiz Night at the Liverpool Curling Club on the first Friday of each month, and it has quickly grown to become a popular night of entertainment for both locals and visitors. Every month, folks scramble to reserve one of the 18 available team tables and a chance to win one of four delectable homemade desserts that have been donated as prizes.

It is my pleasure to recognize Greg's efforts and to thank him for his support and the significant funds he has helped raise on behalf of this important organization in Queens.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**DIWALI: INDIAN CELEB. - RECOG.**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I rise in my place to recognize that we're coming up on the Diwali celebrations that are going to be happening in the city very soon. I look forward to participating in the celebrations with everyone at home. As I've said before in the Legislature, we have thousands of international students now attending Cape Breton University. With that comes a lot of great celebrations around cultures - not only Diwali but cultures from all over the world. I rise in my place to recognize all the students at CBU again, and I look forward to celebrating Diwali with everyone when I get home.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**HOUSING CRISIS: URGENCY - RECOG.**

SUSAN LEBLANC: It is hard to know what else to say to bring the urgency and fear that people are feeling around housing into this Chamber. While drafting this statement, my constituency office received two calls, one email, and one drop-in from people who had already lost or are at immediate risk of losing their housing: a single mother of five, a woman in her 50s, a man in his 60s, and a 78-year-old. The day before, we met with a constituent who is about to be unhoused for the eighth time in his life. We recently supported a 70-year-old man who was released from prison onto a park bench, and then from hospital right back onto that same park bench.

My office fills out many priority access applications for families and seniors who need emergency public housing, but the average wait is 1.6 years. The Bridge is full, and all the other shelters are full, too. Winter weather is here, and hundreds of people are living

outside. Housing is health care, and the government needs to act accordingly to do more faster to ensure everyone has a safe and affordable place to live.

[9:45 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

**VOLS.: ANNAP. BASIN OUTDOOR ADV. SOC. - THANKS**

HON. JILL BALSER: I rise today to recognize the Annapolis Basin Outdoor Adventure Society. The Annapolis Basin Outdoor Adventure Society is a volunteer group that works to create safe and inclusive trails in Annapolis County. These trails are maintained by the society throughout the year so people of all ages can walk, run, bike, cross country ski - you name it.

In June, I joined more than 130 trail enthusiasts to celebrate the official opening of the Upper Clements Trails. Everyone knows and loved Upper Clements Park, the wildlife park, and the adventure park. Now their memory will live on through these trails. Members of the society put lots of love and care into all the details of the trails, from the colours of the park benches to marking the remains of the wildlife park for everyone to see.

The Annapolis Basin Outdoor Adventures Society has already committed over 2,000 hours of volunteer time to build more trails, and they're not done yet. I'd like to thank the hard-working volunteers of the Annapolis Basin Outdoor Adventures Society. I can't wait to get back on the trails.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**VENDORS & VOLS.: SPRYFIELD FMRS. MKT. - THANKS**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, another Summer has come and gone: beautiful weather, warm beaches, and the Spryfield Farmers' Market outdoors. I want to thank all the vendors and volunteers who make this market such a success. This season was amazing. Each year, it grows and grows. What started as a dream and plans from university students has become one of the largest farmers' markets. With the cold weather, it has now moved inside to St. Paul's United Church community hall. Thank you to all involved, and I look forward to continuing to support local.

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

**ORGS. & PARTICS.: AFTERWORDS LIT. FEST. - BEST WISHES**

LISA LACHANCE: The AfterWords Literary Festival is on this weekend. It was founded in 2019 by Ryan Turner and Stephanie Domet. The festival calls upon everyone to

help us build an equitable society where citizens are equipped with the tools and passion to read, write, and tell stories; are empowered to consider other points of view; and where the work of artists is respected as a necessary pillar of democracy. What a great vision statement. There's lots on this weekend, including a kids' day at the Central Library. Speaker, let's all wish best wishes to the festival organizers and goers this weekend.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

#### **NORTHFIELD DIST. FD: FLOOD RELIEF - RECOG.**

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to the exemplary efforts of the Northfield District Fire Department during July's massive flood event, which devastated much of my constituency. In the early hours of July 22<sup>nd</sup>, members of the department arrived on scene at Trunk 10, near Feeners Corner Road, to find fast-moving water flowing over the highway and beginning to engulf a nearby home.

Worried for the home's residents amidst the rising water, the decision was made to evacuate, and a call was placed to Jackie Turner of Turner & Turner Lumber, who quickly arrived with a large front-end loader. Using the loader bucket, Mr. Turner rescued the homeowner, Ted Bruhm, and his partner, Ethel - who uses a walker - and delivered them safely to the highway. This was the first of two rescues that day, and long hours spent pumping basements and managing roadblocks.

Speaker, I ask that members of this House please join me in commending these community heroes.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

#### **STAFF & RESIDENTS: NORTHWOOD BEDFORD - THANKS**

BRAEDON CLARK: Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank the staff and residents at Northwood in my riding of Bedford South. In May, the centre was evacuated twice during the wildfires in Tantallon, upending the lives and routines of the over 200 residents who live there. Residents were evacuated to other Northwood locations for several days, supported by their dedicated staff.

Less than two months later, the centre was again struck by a natural disaster with the July floods. The first floor of the centre suffered severe flood damage, and residents on that floor were forced to relocate for the third time in two months.

Despite these serious challenges, the staff and residents - under the leadership of CEO Janet Simm - remain resilient and cheerful. I ask all members of the House to join me in wishing everyone at Northwood Bedford a return to normalcy and thank them for their courage, as they have faced a most difficult year.



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

**VOLS.: CAPE BRETON ALS WALK STRONG - THANKS**

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, on June 10<sup>th</sup>, I had the privilege to join dozens of community members on the ALS Walk Strong held in New Waterford. I want to recognize the efforts of Nancy Poirier and all the volunteers who made the ALS Walk Strong a success. This year, the Cape Breton ALS Walk Strong raised \$22,830. Please join me in thanking Nancy, the CB walk volunteers, and the community for raising \$22,830 for ALS.

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

**ORG. CMTE.: HAWKS DREAM FIELD - RECOG.**

JOHN WHITE: Speaker, I rise today to recognize the hard work that went into creating the Hawks Dream Field.

“Everyone gets to play”: These are the words of the late Walter McNeil, a baseball fan, player, and coach from Dominion. His belief was that everyone deserves to play, regardless of ability or disability. That was the driving force behind the Hawks Dream Field Society and the result is a field unlike any other.

The fully accessible recreational complex features bocce ball courts, washrooms with large changing tables, an accessible canteen, a splash pad, a walking trail, and many more specialized features designed to ensure inclusivity.

It is my extreme honour today to recognize Walter’s family - Toni, Lisa, and Carrie - as well as the rest of the committee, on the success of this amazing community project. I would also like to recognize the entire community, particularly the Hawks Club and Royal Canadian Legion Branch 78. Together you put the unity in community.

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

**MARCHAND, BRAD: HOCKEY CAREER - CONGRATS.**

HON. BEN JESSOME: I’d like to recognize and congratulate the 27<sup>th</sup> captain of the Boston Bruins, Hammonds Plains native Brad Marchand. He was chosen in the 2006 draft and made his debut with the Bruins in 2009. He’s won a Stanley Cup, he’s performed well at a number of different international competitions, and he’s done extremely well with the Boston Bruins organization. Recently, Bruins CEO Charlie Jacobs said in a release that he’s proud of the hockey player Brad has become. “Brad has been a Bruin for over 15 years and had the opportunity to learn from great leaders like Zdeno Chara and Patrice Bergeron. He is ready for this opportunity and our whole team will learn from his competitive nature and tenacity.” Jacobs feels that Brad will lead with heart and grit.

There's no question that he plays with heart and grit. He's a great guy. I want to wish Brad and the whole Marchand family congratulations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

### **CHILDREN: UNIV. GRADUATION - RECOG.**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, I'll have to stand today and just be a proud mom. I want to share the good news.

This week, I went to Cape Breton University and my husband and I shared in the graduation ceremony for our daughter, Sharon, who graduated from CBU as a registered nurse. I'm so proud of her.

I want to share that our son Matthew is graduating from St. Francis Xavier University as a math and physics high school teacher on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Joel is at basic training right now and heading to Vancouver to be trained as a naval warship officer. Tom is our oldest and his partner Christina just gave us our first grandson, Beau Taylor James McCrossin.

As a mom, I say that once you become a mother, your heart is never your own. I just want to stand today and say "I love you" to all four of my children and how proud I am of them.

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

### **HUB SHOPPING CTR.: REBRANDING - CONGRATS.**

DAVE RITCEY: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Arnold Hagen and Doug Doucet on the grand unveiling of Truro's rebranded mall, The Hub shopping centre. It's only fitting, as Truro is known as the hub of Nova Scotia.

Arnold and Doug's commitment to revitalizing this retail destination is truly commendable. This transformation not only benefits shoppers but also invigorates the local economy, providing new opportunities for businesses and employment. It's inspiring to witness such dedication to community growth and development.

Here's to a vibrant future of shopping, entertainment, and community engagement at the newly rebranded The Hub shopping centre. Thank you to Arnold and Doug for their hard work on this project, and cheers to your success.

THE SPEAKER: Before we continue on here, I just want to acknowledge that there are a number of people in and out of the Chamber who have not entered or exited with

acknowledging the person who is speaking or myself in the Chair. I've allowed this to continue for quite a long time now, but this is my last warning. I will start naming individuals and calling them out as it's actually happening. It's very disrespectful to your colleagues who are speaking, and to the Clerks, and to me.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

### **MLA FOR FAIRV.-CLAYT. PK. - BIRTHDAY WISHES**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I want to wish a very special happy birthday to one of our colleagues here, the member for Fairview-Clayton Park, someone who has become a dear friend of ours. She's been elected since 2013. She's been dedicated to the Liberal Party for years before that.

She was a competent and compassionate minister of the Crown, a Page in this House, and she continues to serve the Crown and the House as Deputy House Leader. She is, I think we can all agree, one of the individuals in this Chamber who knows the most about the rules, knows the most about everything that goes on here.

I just want to say how impressed I am with her, and how proud I am of her for always rising to the occasion and stepping up to serve her community, her party, and the people of the province. Happy birthday.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

### **HINCHEY, MIKE: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: At the 49<sup>th</sup> Provincial Volunteer Awards held recently, Mike Hinchey was recognized for his volunteer work. Mike, a.k.a. Mr. Pickleball, has been instrumental in the success of the Pickleball Antigonish Society. What started with a few players now has more than 250 members of all ages. Mike has strategically built the Pickleball Antigonish membership by identifying the four pillars: community partnerships, leadership, access to education and training, and facility access.

Mike has worked with the Town of Antigonish Recreation Department to have the existing tennis courts renovated to multi-use courts with both tennis lines and pickleball lines. Pickleball Antigonish ensures that everyone is welcome to join, offering beginner instruction courses and a variety of tournaments. I ask all members of the House to thank Mike and all Nova Scotians who volunteer their time and skills for the betterment of our province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**MURPHY, HARRISON: VOL. AWD. RECIP. - CONGRATS.**

CARMAN KERR: Each year, a number of amazing volunteers are celebrated at the Annapolis County Volunteer Expo. One of the very deserving 2023 honourees was 13-year-old Harrison Murphy. Harrison is very active, and a dedicated volunteer at his school and in the broader community. He is the sound and lights operator with the school drama club and has also taken on the role of Swoops, the school mascot.

He helps out with a variety of community celebrations and parades, is involved with the Bridgetown and Area Chamber of Commerce; the Bridgetown and area development association; and a variety of environmental initiatives. I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Harrison Murphy on being recognized at the 2023 Annapolis County Volunteer Expo.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Shelburne.

**COASTAL GROVE FARM: FOOD PROD. - RECOG.**

NOLAN YOUNG: I rise today to recognize Coastal Grove Farm, located in Port La Tour. It's a 100 per cent certified organic farm, including a greenhouse heated and cooled by geothermal energy. This farm is carbon-neutral. With a goal of net negative, it is aiming for less than zero GHG emissions. The farm grows premium-quality hand-harvested organic produce, including saffron, herbs, spices, and vegetables.

Because they use no chemicals and only the best sustainable farming practices with their farm, when their farm is done, the earth will be healthier than it was before. Although Coastal Grove sustained a great deal of damage during Hurricane Lee, they remain committed, and are currently in the process of adding another geothermally heated greenhouse. I respectfully ask all members to join me in thanking the owners, Matt and Cynthia, for their commitment to produce healthy food and a healthy environment for all.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

**RECIPS.: PROV. VOL. AWDS. - CONGRATS.**

HON. GREG MORROW: I rise today to recognize the constituents from Guysborough-Tracadie who recently received the Provincial Volunteer Awards. Bryant Long from Giants Lake has been a lifetime community volunteer with various groups. When his children were in school, he was a volunteer for many extracurricular activities. In his retirement, he continues to volunteer and give back, as it gives him a sense of pride and purpose.

This summer, Michael Porter from Sherbrooke won the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's Volunteer of the Year Award. Michael, a carpenter at Sherbrooke Village, is

a dedicated volunteer, and over the last few years has raised thousands of dollars for the local food bank with his musical talents at the Sherbrooke market days.

[10:00 a.m.]

Lastly, the Mulgrave Volunteer Fire Department has been a constant support for community events and fundraisers, and gives back to other non-profit organizations. Their commitment to their own training to keep the community safe is certainly a comfort to the residents of Mulgrave. I ask members of the House to join me in congratulating these volunteers, and all those who give their time to help their neighbours and communities.

THE SPEAKER: Order. It is now time for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers. The time is now 10:00 a.m. We will finish at 10:50 a.m.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **PREM.: CANADA PENSION PLAN - PROTECT**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Alberta's Conservative premier is threatening Nova Scotian's pensions by aiming to withdraw from the Canada Pension Plan, taking a huge chunk of funding out of that plan with her. When asked about this yesterday by the media, the Premier said: "That'll be between them and the federal government. We don't have any influence on that one."

This could impact the pension for every single senior in Nova Scotia. Why won't the Premier step up and lobby his counterpart to stand down so we can protect the pensions of seniors in this province?

THE PREMIER: We're always concerned about any impact that events at the federal level - at the national level - would have on Nova Scotians. We hope Alberta stays in the national plan. I believe in the federation. I believe in this country. I know it's stronger when it's together. We hope they stay in the CPP.

The finance ministers are meeting today. I know our own Minister of Finance and Treasury Board will be leading a lot of that discussion. I'm meeting with premiers over the next few days. This will no doubt be a topic of discussion. Of course, we want Alberta to stay in the national plan. We're always concerned. I believe in the federation.

ZACH CHURCHILL: The Premier chairs the Council of the Federation. He has say over the agenda. When asked if this issue of critical importance to every single

pensioner in our province was going to be on the agenda, he couldn't say if it would make the cut for the discussion. Will the Premier please commit today to ensure that he and all other premiers stand up against his cousin Conservative, the Premier of Alberta, and stop her from damaging seniors' pensions from one end of the country to the other?

THE PREMIER: I am very proud to be the Chair of the Council of the Federation. We will be meeting this week. We'll meet - we speak frequently. Every premier has some input into the agenda, and their teams as well.

I just want to remind the member that when there are times to stand up for Nova Scotia, this government stands up. That's why we stood up to the carbon tax when the Opposition stayed silent. Guess what? Last week the federal government said, You're right. We will give some reprieve to Nova Scotians.

They need to go further. There is an opportunity for that member to talk to his cousin in Ottawa . . . (Interruptions)

ZACH CHURCHILL: Herein lies the problem. The Premier points to the Opposition party that's in a minority and says, You do something, you lobby, you get something from Ottawa - when he can't do it himself. We've got an issue here, by the way, that's going to impact our seniors way more than the carbon tax is, and the Premier won't stand up for pensioners and seniors in this province, and even get this issue on the agenda of the Council of the Federation. Will he please commit to this Chamber that he'll make sure this conversation is front and centre with all premiers in this country?

THE PREMIER: I just want to assure all Nova Scotians that I would never point to the member opposite and ask him to do something, because I sat here for eight years while he did nothing as the Minister of Health and Wellness, as Minister of Municipal Affairs, or as the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. I know what that member is capable of.

What I will say is this: There are times when it's time to put partisan politics to the side and stand up for Nova Scotians. The first thing that government did when they were in was nothing, but when we put our energy plan forward, they went to the media and said it was terrible. Guess what? Two weeks ago, the national government said, We support that plan.

They've had chances to stand up. They've had many chances to stand up for Nova Scotians. I'm just waiting for the first time they do.

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

**PREM.: ER CRISIS - FIX**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Yesterday, the Premier talked about the national attention that our province is getting on health care. Since he wants to talk about the news, I'll table a few national and international stories about the ER crisis that has worsened since he was elected.

From the *New York Post*: "Mom Allison Holthoff dies after waiting seven hours in Nova Scotia ER." I'll table that. From CTV Vancouver - about Cape Breton Regional. From the UK *Independent*: "Woman who died after waiting seven hours in ER told husband she thought she was dying."

The situation in our emergency rooms is worse now than when these were written. When is the government going to admit that there is a serious issue to deal with in our emergency rooms?

THE PREMIER: Speaker, those are obviously incredibly tragic outcomes that are devastating. All Nova Scotians feel the pain, for sure, when that happens. I know that I personally feel that pain in a very big way, and I know that the people working in those emergency departments take that very personally. It has a huge impact on them as well.

We have tremendous people working in our emergency departments. They go to work every single day - day and night - to support Nova Scotians, to be there for Nova Scotians. Nobody looks away from a tragic outcome like that, but that does not change the fact that there are incredible strides being made to improve what happens in our health care system overall.

I am very proud of the work the team is doing, but we feel terrible pain when those tragedies happen.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Yesterday, and it seems again today, the Premier is dismissing the issue of increasing deaths in our emergency rooms. Yesterday, he said that the very nature of the department is that not everyone can be saved, and that the proportion of people dying is remaining steady. It's not, and I'll table that.

He also took the opportunity to plug a new app that is not going to help someone in critical condition waiting in an emergency room hallway. While the Premier is announcing apps, people are dying. When is he going to treat this like the serious issue that it is?

THE PREMIER: Nova Scotians elected us to fix health care and we are very focused on that. There are high volumes in our emergency departments. We know that for sure. We know there are incredible innovations that are coming to help divert people away from emergency departments. The app is part of that.

There are many moving parts. Diverting people away from the emergency department helps those in the emergency department by controlling the volumes a little bit. If there are people who are turning to emergency departments for things where there are other places they could go and be better served - like the pharmacy clinics, the mobile clinics, virtual care - that's a good thing when we can divert people away.

The importance of the app - and I hope the member would recognize this at some point - is if we can divert people away from the emergency department that helps our emergency departments. It is all tied together, Speaker, and we're doing incredible innovations working with health care professionals.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Yesterday, the Premier said the issue was that people were coming in at a high triage level; today it's people who are coming in because they didn't go to the pharmacy clinic. All we are asking is to acknowledge that this is a problem, and to understand what we're going to do about it.

A hospital staff person explained that one man died recently after waiting five hours in an ambulance hallway. It was five hours and forty minutes because they didn't realize he needed a blood transfusion - for five hours, because of all the dysfunction in the emergency department.

More people died in the first nine months this year than in the entire, record-breaking year previous. Staff in ERs are going above and beyond, but they need this government to do more.

Will the Premier please acknowledge that this is a problem, and tell us how he is going to fix it?

THE PREMIER: Speaker, when there's a negative outcome, it is a problem, and it is painful for people. There will be people who pass away in emergency departments. It is the very nature of an emergency department that the sickest show up there. There will be situations where people pass in emergency departments, and it is hard on those people working in the departments. It is certainly hard on governments. We take that.

I'd be happy to walk the member through all the various innovations that we've made to improve health care. If I thought they would have a receptive audience, I'd be happy to invest that time. Time and time again we talk about what is happening, but time and time again we see that member stand up in this Chamber and be negative about teachers, saying they make their kids put their hands up; be negative about those working in triage, questioning their ability to triage people. I trust the people delivering services to Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.



**FTB: CANADA PENSION PLAN - SUPPORT**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, we see on display again the Premier's tactics. When he is asked a question that he can't answer, he blames and deflects. We're asking a serious question about a potential impact to every single senior in this province - their income and their inability to put food on the table, pay for their medication and make their mortgage payments or rent payments - and the Premier gets up and grandstands about other issues.

He actually has an opportunity to play a leadership role this weekend with all of his Premier friends being here, including Premier Danielle Smith. Will he ensure that the Canada Pension Plan issue is on the agenda, front and centre, so that his Premiers can make a stand and protect those seniors who require these pensions to live every day?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Speaker, I have no doubt that the Premier has already answered that question. He indicated that all Premiers will have a say in what the agenda is for that meeting. We will all be interested to see how that meeting goes. I will assure the member that this issue is also being dealt with at the finance ministers table today at lunch time. We will certainly be putting forward Nova Scotia's position, which is that we believe in the Canada Pension Plan as part of the national fabric of our country, and we believe it's the place for all provinces and territories to stay.

ZACH CHURCHILL: The other thing the Premier does when he can't answer a question is deflect to another minister. I'm sorry, but the Deputy Premier is not sitting at the Council of the Federation this weekend with the other premiers. He's not at the table with Premier Danielle Smith. We have had an answer from the Premier: He's not going to push to have this issue on the table. I don't even think the Premier knows what the impact is actually going to be on seniors in this province.

My question to the Premier - because he's the only one sitting at the table with Premier Danielle Smith - is: Will he stand up for Nova Scotians' interests, and tell Premier Danielle Smith to stand down on this dangerous and devastating proposal?

ALLAN MACMASTER: These problems are not always solved by people trying to jump in front of cameras, trying to get headlines. Oftentimes, cooler heads will prevail, sensibilities will prevail. We want to make sure that in our efforts, we're helping the country stay together and come together around something so important to Canadians and Nova Scotians as the Canada Pension Plan.

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

**FTB: ADDRESS CPP ISSUE - COMMIT**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: This issue is solved with leadership and standing up for the interests of seniors in our province. That's how it's going to be solved. This is another issue the Premier has tried to sweep under the rug. He won't even get in his place and answer a simple question. He's the Chair . . . (Interruption) That's not true? That's not true? It is true. I'm asking the Premier. He's the Chair of the Council of the Federation. We, as an Opposition Party, are calling on him to have the CPP issue on the agenda this weekend with his fellow premiers.

Will he commit today to the House to ensuring that happens?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: The issues on the national table today at the virtual meeting - we have a meeting called by the federal minister, Minister Freeland. She has called the meeting. The topic of discussion is the Canada Pension Plan. I think we should wait to see how discussions go today to see what comes out of that meeting. It will be a very important meeting. We will put Nova Scotia's position forward. Let's start with that, because a lot of provinces have been spending a lot of time behind the scenes discussing this, and discussing positions and where things might go. Let's give it a chance to see what comes out of today's meeting.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I want to compare the government's response to the carbon tax to this one. Tons of focus on resources; on blaming the Opposition party, which doesn't hold a seat with the federal government; attack ads spent; a lot of time spent blaming the Opposition party for the government's own failure. When it comes to this issue, where the Premier is in a leadership role amongst the federation - he's the Chair of the Council of the Federation - he can't even stand up and say that he's going to get this issue on the agenda of the Council this weekend when he's hosting the meeting.

My question to the Premier, and nobody else, is: Will he at least commit to this House, in his spot, to put this issue on the agenda of the Council of the Federation this weekend while he's hosting all the premiers across the country here?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Speaker - a very important issue. I think Tom Mulcair made a note about our Premier's efforts on the carbon tax - methodical efforts that we saw last week make a difference for Nova Scotians who use heating oil. The carbon tax is now off heating oil in this province. The federal government hasn't gone far enough. We would like the carbon tax eliminated, because we don't believe it gives options for people to move away from fossil fuels - because it doesn't. It just makes it more expensive for people already living with higher interest rates and inflation.

I hope we will continue to be methodical to get the targeted . . .

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

[10:15 a.m.]

### **FTB: SENIORS' PENSIONS - ADDRESS**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: You've got to love this government. They blame everybody else. I love it too, actually. Here's what becomes more obvious every single week: They love taking credit for other people's work, like the minister just did, and blaming everybody else for their failures. It's an absolutely incredible thing. You can never lose when you've got no net and you're playing tennis that way. Yay, you guys are great. Put that in your next video. My question to the Premier: We've got an opportunity . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. The Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

ZACH CHURCHILL: We've got an opportunity this weekend to deal with an issue of grave importance that's bigger than the tax system. This is about seniors' pensions. Will the Premier stand in his place and commit to putting this issue on the agenda?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I know the member opposite would love to be at that table, but he's not. Nova Scotians have placed their confidence in our Premier to be at that table, probably because he has a lot of common sense when it comes to the issue of the carbon tax. I have no doubt he will have a lot of common sense when it comes to the issue of the Canada Pension Plan.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Here's the fact: If it was me in that chair, I wouldn't be deflecting on this issue that could impact every single senior in Nova Scotia. I wouldn't be trying to distract with smoke and mirrors. (Interruption) Maybe not, but I'm at least going to bring it up right now and ask, because it's important.

Our seniors depend on their pensions. Many are barely able to make ends meet in this province right now, with costs of everything going up, and the Premier smiles in his place and doesn't even stand up and answer a question. The minister deflects and talks about other issues. We've got seniors who are scared right now. They want to know that their Premier, whoever it is, is going to be there for them when they need him.

Will the Premier stand in his place and tell the people of this province that he will ensure that the CPP issue is on the agenda for the Council of the Federation this weekend?

THE SPEAKER: Before we begin, I just want to remind members that you are not to indicate what other members are doing - if they're blowing a bubble, if they're scratching their head, if they're laughing. Okay? Let's just remember that.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Speaker, I don't see how we're deflecting this issue. We have a meeting with the Minister of Finance today. I have no doubt that premiers are going to be watching what happens in that meeting. I actually know for a fact that a lot of

premiers have been talking to their finance ministers and ensuring that their finance ministers are putting their provinces' cases forward on the Canada Pension Plan.

There's no deflecting. It's happening today at lunchtime. I'll be speaking to the media afterwards. I have no doubt that the premiers will be watching all of it, and they'll be continuing on discussions when they meet later this weekend.

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

### **EECD: PAY FOR ECEs - ADDRESS**

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The members of CUPE Local 5054 include developmental interventionists who work with thousands of Nova Scotia families every year, and inclusion coaches, who provide coaching services to ECEs in early-years programs across the province. These specialists were not included in the recent ECE wage increase and as a result are now earning less than many of the ECEs whom they mentor. Will the minister commit to paying these workers what they deserve?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Our Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services plays a very important role province-wide in providing specialized services to families. We and families and our educational leaders and staff greatly value the incredible and important work that they do. These are workers who are unionized, as the member opposite mentioned, and as we have done since we have taken office, we very much respect the collective bargaining process and the role that the unions play in establishing wages for these important workers. We continue to ascribe to that respect. We continue to respect that relationship and continue to work with the unions in resolving any questions around wages for these workers.

KENDRA COOMBES: I find that rich, Speaker, considering how many times this government has gone outside the bargaining process to pay other sectors - we can list them later. This government is risking families, children, and ECEs losing access to the important services provided by CUPE 5054 employees. In the absence of a fair pay, many are facing the hard decision to leave this organization in search of appropriate wages. It has been a year since they asked for funding to increase their wages and they have heard nothing from the government in response. My question to the minister is: Why would this minister rather let thousands of children and families go without these programs than pay these workers a fair wage?

BECKY DRUHAN: The member opposite is absolutely right. These are incredibly important workers who support our vulnerable students and do incredible work in our educational system and we do absolutely value that work.

I would also remind the member opposite that we respect the bargaining process - we respect these workers and these unions. We have done so much already to improve pay and compensation for this sector that has been neglected for decades. We have invested in our ECEs in child care - 14 per cent to 46 per cent raises for those folks. We have bargained with and come to agreements with other employees and unions in our educational sector and will continue to do that for these important workers, as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

### **NRR: FIRE RISK MAP - IMPLEMENT**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Speaker, for the last 10 years, DNRR has been assessing communities for fire risk and the recent fire hazard reports found multiple Nova Scotia communities at extreme risk for fire, and I will table that. Five of those assessments are within HRM and three of those are within the Prospect area - Hatchet Lake, Kelly Point, and Shag End. The province is working to develop a fire risk map which will allow them to focus on education materials in those communities but that is going to take some time.

The assessments also flag structural issues that only governments can address, like emergency access, and there is no timeline for change built into the reports. My question to the minister is: What is the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables doing to ensure we are actively working with HRM to address the recommendations in the report and that residents are aware of what they can do to keep them safe?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Just a quick recognition to the 300-plus firefighters that we have in our Department of Natural Resources and Renewables - all the first responders, agencies, and support units that supported us through this time this past year. Our thoughts are certainly with the families and communities that were impacted.

As the member knows, the FireSmart program is a very important fire prevention mechanism within our department with the wildland fire interfaced with urban areas. There certainly are many inspections that go on. Once the FireSmart program does get initiated through community or a municipal ask, the report does go into the community groups or the local municipalities and the action does take place on there, but certainly I recognize the fact that we still need to have a three-way conversation to ensure the program does carry on.

IAIN RANKIN: I appreciate the answer. Shortly after the large fire that happened in the Tantallon area, a fire was sparked on the Prospect Road. I want to ask the question because we were lucky that there was air support in the area and we were able to knock the fire down quickly on Prospect Road. I want to thank those firefighters for being able to do that. After that fire in Tantallon, two emergency access points were created very quickly in Hammonds Plains. My question to the minister is: Will the Department of Natural

Resources and Renewables work proactively to install more emergency exits in areas like Prospect but other areas of extreme risk of fire as well?

TORY RUSHTON: It is not necessarily DNRR that puts these egress points in. It is communication from the local municipality, local community groups that put their wishes in to the local municipalities and road-building processes. I can inform the members of the whole House that there are ongoing conversations about different communities throughout all of Nova Scotia, where these egresses need to be. We're doing our part 100 per cent.

I know that my colleague at Public Works, they're also doing their part to ensure that every community that's looking for egress will get it. I will also say, since June, there's been 15 home assessments done, 10 community assessments done, and over half a dozen FireSmart presentations done by our department. We'll certainly carry on this fire prevention program.

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

#### **EECD: NEW PARK WEST SCHOOL - BUILD**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Speaker, the students at our schools in Clayton Park West are bursting at the seams. We have school support workers working in utility closets. We have student classes that have no windows. In 2021, thanks to our Liberal government with help from the feds, Park West School received 12 modular classrooms to accommodate this growth. Then, in June of this year, one additional portable was brought back. Just three months later, they had to add two more portables to accommodate growth. My question is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development: How many more portables will we need before we see shovels in the ground for our new school at Park West?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: We know that Nova Scotia's population is growing. That is an exciting thing. It brings with it challenges, though. That means that we have increasing enrolment in schools. I am so very proud of this government's capital plan, which incorporates elements that deal with short-term, mid-term, and long-term issues that haven't been addressed in years to make sure that we have school facilities that meet the needs not only of our communities today but going forward.

What does that capital plan look like? Speaker, we have invested a billion dollars in ensuring that we have schools. We, for the first time, have a short-term plan that addresses immediate needs, which include regular ongoing additions of modulars in communities across the province. I look forward to speaking more in the next 45 seconds.

RAFAH DICONSTANZO: The school was promised eight years ago. This is an old thing that she should have had ready by now.

Anyway, Speaker, last Spring HRM agreed to sell the land for the school to the Province. Since then, we know studies have been conducted on the land to see if it was suitable for the school. We were told that a study was completed last month and that it would be submitted to HRCE. I hope the current relationship between the Province and HRM is not going to delay it further.

My question to the Minister of Public Works is: Can she update us on the negotiation with HRM and when an announcement can be made?

HON. KIM MASLAND: I have to say if this project would have been started eight years ago, we'd be flushing the toilets today. But it wasn't - it was shoved aside. Site selection was approved by the municipality in February to transfer the lands over. We're working through the progress, and I can't wait for the minister and I to be there and open the doors on that new school.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

### **DHW: AMBULANCE WAIT TIMES - REDUCE**

CARMAN KERR: On the weekend, there was another serious medical emergency in Annapolis. It reminded residents of how serious ambulance wait times are, and just how much pressure our paramedics are under. A senior citizen fell while playing golf at a local course. She blew out her knee and fractured her wrist. Fellow golfers called 911. They were told not to move her due to injuries. She lay in the mud in her own blood for three hours and waited for an ambulance to arrive.

Several constituents reached out to my office about this incident. One constituent referred to this as a terrible situation. Another concluded his e-mail by saying, All of us that were at this incident were reminded how dire things in health care are. And I'll table that correspondence.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: What is this government doing to reduce ambulance wait times in Annapolis?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I hadn't heard that story before now and I certainly will look into that if the member gives me the details.

I will say that it's really important. We talked about a system status plan yesterday. Although the Opposition has complained about and criticized the work that happened at the Halifax Infirmity, I was able to go there yesterday. The capacity that has been built in the HI matters to the entire system, which is how the status plan works.

We are working very hard with our partners in acute care, looking at capacity in emergency rooms, making sure that we're reducing off-load times. We're working with

our paramedic colleagues, making sure that we have the staffing they need. We're looking at their equipment as well. There are a number of things happening throughout the system, Speaker.

[10:30 a.m.]

CARMAN KERR: To be fair, a system plan and talking about Halifax isn't going to help a resident lying for three hours in their own blood in Annapolis.

The Minister of Health and Wellness has previously indicated that the reduction in open hours at the emergency department at Soldiers Memorial Hospital is due to a physician staffing challenge and that the goal to return the department back to 24/7 service is on their agenda. However, I see very little action and progress on this goal. Unfortunately, I have received very little site-specific information on this, only broad statements around efforts to recruit more physicians in Annapolis.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Can she provide specific details on what is being done to enhance capacity at Soldiers Memorial Hospital emergency?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: In fact, what happens in HI does matter to the folks all across this province because we pull for coverage all the time. We are a system and we need to take a system response.

The work that's happening in the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care - there have been 47 beds at old Villa Acadienne opening to increase capacity. There are a number of things happening across this province. Every single initiative we take makes a difference to the entire system. We can no longer do piecemeal, rob Peter to pay Paul, like what happened in the former government.

This is what it takes to transform health care. We are investing record amounts of money. We are speaking every day to health care workers. We are making appreciable change in the system, and I can assure all Nova Scotians that we will not stop.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **MAH: RENT SUPPLEMENT CHANGE - REVERSE**

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Last week, after changing the rent supplement program to no longer allow a statutory declaration in place of a lease, the minister told reporters that "it's got to be quite rare that someone doesn't have a lease." I can table that.



In fact, Speaker, it is not. For example, data from the CBRM shows that 6 per cent of rental agreements don't have lease agreements and 28 per cent don't have leases in rooming houses. I can table that.

Given this information, will the minister reverse this policy change and allow statutory declarations in place of leases?

HON. JOHN LOHR: What in fact has happened is that before we made our change it was just routine. There was the option of one - provide a lease or provide a statutory declaration. We've changed the policy so that we require a lease but if there is not a lease available, we will accept a statutory declaration, if there are other corroborating documents along with that. We are not slamming the door on that, but we're saying it's not just a routine (a) or (b), one or the other. There needs to be more corroborating information with that statutory declaration.

SUSAN LEBLANC: This is new news and has not been shared, I think, with constituency offices or the public. This change that I just talked about comes on the heels of a slew of changes to the program that will make it harder for people to qualify but the government is being opaque about the details of the changes.

The minister last week said that maybe a power bill could be used in place of a lease. Today he is saying a statutory declaration with corroborating documents. My office wasn't given any of this information or options. Nova Scotia Legal Aid staff lawyer Nora MacIntosh was given a \$900 fee estimate when she simply tried to access the policies the department uses for the rent supplement program. I can table that.

My question to the minister is: Why is the government so secretive about how to access this already restrictive program?

JOHN LOHR: What I can say is that we have one of the most successful rent supplement programs in the country. I've said this before in the House: When I meet with my other provincial counterparts, one of the questions they often ask federal ministers is, Can we use that money for something else? They're not fully subscribed with their rent supplement program. We're more than fully subscribed: We're four times over. We've got a \$52 million program - of which approximately \$42 million is provincial money - in what was meant to be a cost-share program. I have raised that issue with the federal Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities.

We need the feds to step up more than that. That's clear. We're working hard on this program. We're proud of the program we have.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**DHW: HOSPITAL PARKING FEES - CUT**

CARMAN KERR: Recently, the Municipality of the County of Annapolis wrote to the Minister of Health and Wellness to cut hospital parking fees from our area and across the province. They have requested government to seriously consider removing all parking fees from publicly funded hospitals immediately to show true compassion for hundreds of thousands of low-income Nova Scotians who shouldn't have to decide if they seek medical treatment for fear of not being able to pay for parking. We need to remove this preventable barrier today. I've also tabled a bill requesting as such. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Will the minister listen to the ask of the County of Annapolis and cut parking fees for our hospitals?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We know that, across the province, there are parking fees in a variety of different places. These generate funds, but I also know that every single hospital has an opportunity. If people need any assistance with that parking, there are chits available. It would work with people. Also, we have long-term parking fees in several areas where, if there are people who are in hospital for long periods of time and family members and loved ones need to visit on a regular basis, we can look at parking fees. I would encourage people, if they're in that situation - there's a business office. I know they're very compassionate and kind, and I know they would work with people to consider their individual circumstances.

THE SPEAKER: Just a reminder to members that you are not to mention that you've introduced bills or talk about your bills, other than when they are called to be discussed or debated.

The honourable member for Annapolis.

CARMAN KERR: People need to drive to hospitals because there isn't a lot of public transport access in rural Nova Scotia, and they often can't get an ambulance in Annapolis as well. By reducing fees, it would help the people in my constituency who are dependent on driving to the hospital for their appointments or the ER, even though it's seldom open. There are 18 hospitals in the province without parking fees. Why can't the hospitals in Middleton and Annapolis be among those?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: We know that parking fees do generate income for hospitals. To the member's point about people in rural Nova Scotia who must drive, I think maybe if he spoke to his counterparts to reduce the Liberal carbon tax, maybe that would help people get to the hospital better.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West, joining us virtually. Order. Just a reminder to the member who's joining us virtually to please turn on your speaker. You may go ahead, please.

The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**DHW: 24-HOUR CARE AT NEW CTR. - COMMIT**

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: The residents of Clayton Park West are eager about the opening of the new Bayers Lake Community Outpatient Centre. However, my petition is still growing in numbers for the Province to operate the facility 24 hours a day. We have now over 2,200 signatures and growing. The Premier just said today that we need to divert patients away from emergency services downtown, and all the equipment is there for this new centre to operate 24 hours a day. My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Can she commit to looking at 24-hour urgent care at the new state-of-the-art centre?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We are excited about that project. I know it was started under the previous government. We are looking forward to the opening of that facility. We are currently going to remain with the model that we have. We want to get that up and running, staff it to its capacity, and make sure we're utilizing all the resources there. Down the road, as we continue to understand the utilization of that facility and those services, we will look at what the opportunity is, but I cannot commit to that today.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: We are happy that the current government is following through on our government's commitment from 2017 to build the centre. I am looking to visiting it on November 20<sup>th</sup>. My question to the minister: Is the outpatient centre going to be fully staffed, or are there any vacancies that they are still trying to fill?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, recruitment has been under way. I don't have those numbers in front of me, in terms of the vacancies. Certainly, there is a churn within the Nova Scotia Health Authority in terms of people moving throughout the system, so I expect that there will be vacancies initially, but we're going to do the very best we can to staff those. It's a new, dynamic place to work. I think there will be a number of people who are really wanting to go work there. I don't expect that there will be significant vacancies at the time of opening.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**DOJ: HOLTHOFF POST THREAT - EXPLAIN**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, my question today is for the Premier. When Allison Holthoff passed away tragically in our hospital, her husband came to me the very next day my office was open and asked for help. He wanted answers: Was the emergency room staffed properly? Why was there still a makeshift emergency room at the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre?

My office reached out to the Minister of Health and Wellness's office to ask for a meeting with Allison's husband, and we were told no. The next day, I put the request in writing. Still the answer was no. My question to the Premier is: Why did I receive an email from the Department of Justice threatening me with legal action if I did not take down a Facebook post with the letter request to the Minister of Health and Wellness to meet with Allison's husband?

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, through you to the member, if I recall correctly, it wasn't as much threatening to take down the post as it was to advise the member that there could potentially be some issues if they disclosed any information. It was more of a warning letter, I think, than it was anything else, to ensure that the member didn't do anything to get themselves into any issues.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: The email was sent to me at midnight on Friday night, and it was absolutely a threat. A FOIPOP request requesting information on this communication resulted in - I believe it was a 37-page redacted document citing solicitor-client privilege that this communication had happened through the Premier's Office.

A woman died waiting for medical care in our hospital, and that was the government's response to this man who was asking questions on behalf of his children and the entire community. I'm sorry. It's very emotional.

Can the Premier please explain the actions of his own office, the Premier's Office, his Minister of Health and Wellness's office, and the Minister of Justice's office, and can he please give some answers to Allison Holthoff's husband as to why this happened?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: It really is important, when we enter into conversations in the public realm, that we are very sure that we have consent and we don't disclose any personal health information. I don't think, if people are advocating for folks, that the public realm is where we should be doing that.

I am happy to speak to family members. I have done that on a number of occasions. When MLAs come to me . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order. As mentioned, this is an important question, and we would like to hear the answer for this. Maybe just give the Minister of Health and Wellness time to answer.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MICHELLE THOMPSON: When MLAs come to me directly with consent, I'm very happy to sit and speak with families. I have no problem with that. But we have a responsibility, 1) as a health care system, and 2) as a government, to make sure that we do

not disclose any information that we are not very, very sure is in the best interest of that family in a public domain. Any time there is someone who requires assistance, I am happy to offer that, but I will not play that out in a public environment.

[10:45 a.m.]

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

**DOA: NOURISHING COMMUNITIES PGM. - FUND**

LISA LACHANCE: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia's Nourishing Communities program supports local economies. It allows families to shop locally for food and goods from farmers' markets at no cost. In the words of one Nourishing Communities participant, "Please keep this program, and expand it . . . This program helps ensure I have enough fresh unprocessed food and I'm able to afford my prescription medications." I'll table that.

This program has a proven success record in helping Nova Scotians facing food insecurity. Will the minister commit to properly funding the Nourishing Communities program so people can have access to healthy, local foods?

HON. GREG MORROW: The government has increased the funding for this program. It started at \$350,000 and was increased to \$422,000, and we've maintained that increase over the last year and into this year. Fiscal year 2021-22, \$350,000 core funding, plus an extra \$72,400 in additional support for a total of \$422,000. We maintained that in 2022-23, and we've committed to maintaining it into 2023-24.

LISA LACHANCE: In 2023-24, actually, because the federal funding fell away, the Province refused to make up the difference. While we wait for that program to be re-established, we continue to wait for the food and beverage strategy. We have to make do with gimmicks like Nova Scotia Loyal, which Nova Scotia farmer Ted Hutton called "silly," "completely stupid," and "offensive." I'll table that.

Despite rising rates of food insecurity and inflation this year, the government decided to allow the funding for the Nourishing Communities program to be cut. This is the time to be investing in programs like Nourishing Communities, not cutting them in lieu of wrapped N.S. Loyal trucks that help no one.

Will the Minister tell us when he's going to table the Food and Beverage Strategy so we can move forward and fund important programs like Nourishing Communities?

GREG MORROW: I would agree with the member opposite that the government did decide to cut this program - the federal government cut it to the tune of \$70,000. We have maintained our funding through the years and have actually increased it. In regard to

the food and beverage strategy, yes, we will have an update soon on that. We'll have an update on the timing soon.

We received almost 2,000 responses, and we thank Nova Scotians for their help in developing this very important strategy that will contribute to food security in the province. We take it very seriously and we want to take the time to get it right.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

### **DHW - HOLTHOFF DEATH - EXPLAIN**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I'd like to respond to the comments of the Minister of Health and Wellness. I want to make sure that it's on the record, and her office knows this - that a consent was sent, signed by Gunter Holthoff, on the very first day that we made a request on his behalf for him to have a meeting with the Minister of Health and Wellness, and that request was denied. A consent was sent.

The fact is that the family should have received answers. The Premier was on the record with the media, telling the province that this man would receive answers. He has still, to this day, not received any answers as to why his wife died after waiting eight hours in the emergency department.

Can the Premier please explain why his office was even involved in this, and why there was communication between the Premier's Office and the Minister of Justice to me, asking me to take down a Facebook post related to this death?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: As a former registered nurse, the member knows there absolutely are processes in place for us to work with families. Those processes are followed in every case when a request is taken through the appropriate channels, either my office or Nova Scotia Health Authority.

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

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, may I make a quick introduction, please?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, you may.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Madame la présidente, j'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue aux élèves de neuvième année de l'École secondaire Mosaïque de Dartmouth North. Ces étudiants, enseignés par Bailey Ross - who used to be a Page here - suivent le cours de

citoyenneté qui vise à promouvoir la citoyenneté active et l'éducation civique et d'enseigner et explorer la gouvernance de nos institutions.

I would like to welcome the Grade 9 students from l'École secondaire Mosaïque in Dartmouth North. These students, who are taught by Bailey Ross, who used to be a Page here, are taking the citizenship course, which is designed to promote active citizenship, civics and to teach and explore the governance of our institutions.

A special shout-out, Speaker, to Emma Myatt, who is the stepdaughter of the honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the member for Dartmouth East. Hello Emma, I saw you up there somewhere.

These students have just begun their final project that will permit them to create their own political parties. They will establish their own party names, select an ideology, and create a platform in conjunction with the political values they associate to their party.

Today I think we've offered them an excellent example of partisanship. It all sounds pretty great. We're probably looking at some future MLAs, deputies, MPs, so let's give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome. I hope you're enjoying your visit here to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly. I look forward to chatting with you shortly.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, on a point of order, I would like the Minister of Health and Wellness to retract her comments. I am not a former registered nurse. I am a registered nurse to this day.

THE SPEAKER: That's not a point of order. You can certainly take time outside the Chamber. It's not a point of order, sorry.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, I just want to make sure that if something is said in this Chamber that is not accurate, that it is corrected. (Laughter) Why is that funny? Why is that funny?

THE SPEAKER: A point of order is for breaches of the Rules. Allowing someone to know about your personal information - there are a lot of things said in the Chamber that are incorrect, so it's just a difference. Certainly, you could have the conversation outside the Chamber to update the minister on your professional history.

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

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

THE SPEAKER: We will now take a short recess and resolve into Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

[10:54 a.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Nolan Young in the Chair.]

[6:31 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened. Deputy Speaker Nolan Young resumed the Chair.]

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

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

**Bill No. 332 - Workers' Compensation Act (amended).**

**Bill No. 337 - Electricity Act (amended).**

without amendments and the Chair has been instructed to recommend these bills to the favourable consideration of the House.

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be read again for a third time at a future date.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: I move that the House do now rise to meet again on Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. Government business will include Committee of the Whole House on Bills and third reading of bills on the order paper.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that we do now rise and report again on November 6<sup>th</sup> from the hours of 4:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.



We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 6:32 p.m.]

**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 801**

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

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

Whereas Amy MacGowan, who is a trusted and dedicated fundraising volunteer in Queens County, has been awarded with the Region of Queens Municipality's Volunteer of the Year and;

Whereas Amy always steps up and leads the way with numerous fundraising initiatives for community members in need; and

Whereas each year she organizes benefits for at least two families dealing with health issues or devastating loss, most years her fundraising totals an impressive \$20,000, however this year her efforts have exceeded \$35,000;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in offering sincere thanks to Amy for all that she continues to do for Queens County.

**RESOLUTION NO. 802**

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

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

Whereas Sylvia Hurley and her outstanding volunteer work benefits various nonprofit organizations in Queens County; and

Whereas Sylvia is dedicated to serving the community, actively volunteers for multiple local worthwhile causes, some of which include the Queens County Victorian Order of Nurses Meals on Wheels and foot care clinic initiatives, Family and Children Services and Restorative Justice programs, the local Kinettes Club, Milton Baptist Church, the Hank Snow Tribute, as well as being a greeter at Queens General Hospital; and

Whereas Sylvia is an outstanding community contributor who was recently honoured as Volunteer of the Year by the Region of Queens Municipality at the Provincial Volunteer Awards;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Sylvia for her selfless work and for the huge difference she continues to make in people's lives.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 803**

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

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

Whereas Queens County athlete Courtney Whynott has recently earned a spot on the Acadia University Competitive Cheerleading Team; and

Whereas Courtney is the first athlete from her school cheer program who has gone on to participate on a university team; and

Whereas Courtney started cheer in Grade 6 and since then has won numerous competitions and accolades, both individually and with her teams that she has represented with her skill and dedication;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Courtney on her successful cheer journey so far and wish her well as she continues into her university career, where she is studying Sociology.