



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Karla MacFarlane

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First Session

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Karla MacFarlane

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Lisa Lachance, Danielle Barkhouse, Nolan Young

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. We are going to begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Today I rise on a very serious matter. As you know, I have provided notice of a question of privilege.

THE SPEAKER: Order. I have called the daily routine, Presenting and Reading Petitions. Are you rising on other business?

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I have a question of privilege that I am rising on today.

THE SPEAKER: Go ahead, please.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: As you know, I have provided notice of a question of privilege concerning the Speaker's public comments impugning my motivations.

THE SPEAKER: Order. Before we go any further, I am assuming at this point that this order of privilege is regarding myself.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. At this point in time, I would kindly ask the MLA for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island to please come forward, and I will remove myself from the Chair.

[Deputy Speaker Lisa Lachance assumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I have provided notice of a question of privilege, concerning the Speaker's public comments impugning my reputation, my motivations, in a CBC interview aired on January 23, 2024 on the six o'clock news show. There is also a question of privilege of breach of impartiality, related to a request for the Speaker to meet . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. In reference to your question of privilege, it is unparliamentary to reflect on the character of the Speaker. If you wish to raise these issues, they will have to come through a substantive notice of motion.

The honourable member for Cumberland North. Do you have any questions or concerns?

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you, Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I'm returning the Chair to the Speaker.

[Speaker Karla MacFarlane resumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: We will return to the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition, which reads as follows:

“Whereas over a quarter of those who are homeless for the first time are over the age of 60; and

“Whereas nearly 6,000 people are on the wait-list for public housing, with an average wait time of two years;

“Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government ban evictions of seniors whose incomes would qualify them for public housing until there is a place in public housing for them to go.”

This petition has been signed by a considerable number of the residents of Quinpool Road and Bloomingdale Terrace in the constituency of Halifax Chebucto, and I have also signed it.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS****STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS****GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

RESOLUTION NO. 912

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall:

(1) read and table the message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor transmitting the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the Province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, for the consideration of this House;

(2) table the Estimate Books;

- (3) table the Government Business Plan;
- (4) table the Estimate resolutions;
- (5) deliver my Budget Speech; and
- (6) move that the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the Province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, being Supply to be granted to His Majesty, be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Supply.

Speaker, for the information of the House, if they're not aware already, Budget Day will be this Thursday, February 29th.

THE SPEAKER: The notice of motion has been tabled.

Are there any further Government Notices of Motion?

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

HON. TWILA GROSSE: Speaker, before I read my Government Notice of Motion, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: You may.

TWILA GROSSE: Speaker, I am honoured to introduce guests from the African Nova Scotian community sitting in the Speaker's Gallery today. With us today are activist Trayvone Clayton from GameChangers902; President of the Association of Nigerians in Nova Scotia, Adegoke Fadare; from the Black Cultural Centre, we have Executive Director Russell Grosse; and the Chair of the Board of Directors, Merv Broome. We also have Daphne Daisy During, Chair of the United African Canadian Women's Association; Tia Upshaw, CEO of the Canadian Blk Women in Excellence Society; Christopher Johnson, member of the board of directors of The Tunnel Vision Association; and from the Jamaican Cultural Association of Nova Scotia, Olive Phillips, President, and Marie Smith. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: It's such a pleasure to have you here today. Welcome.

The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 913

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

[1:15 p.m.]

Whereas African Nova Scotians have been part of Nova Scotia's heritage for more than 400 years, helping shape our province's rich history, culture, and identity with resilience and strength; and

Whereas the provincial government recognizes and embraces the unique diversity within our African Nova Scotian community with its rich heritage and enduring spirit that has contributed immeasurably to the fabric of our province; and

Whereas the Province is committed to forging a path forward, hand in hand with our African Nova Scotian communities, empowering them to lead and shape a future that reflects the true essence of equity and justice;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislative Assembly not only recognize February as African Heritage Month, but also call upon all Nova Scotians to strive to create a future where the voices of African Nova Scotians and people of African descent are heard, respected, and integrated in our province's cultural and social tapestry.

Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate. (Standing ovation)

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 Public Works.

RESOLUTION NO. 914

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

Whereas Nova Scotia has seen a significant amount of snowfall this Winter; and

Whereas from February 2nd to 5th, the province saw a record-setting snowfall that created challenges for people across the province; and

Whereas snow removal operators worked around the clock to make sure roads and highways were clear and safe;

Therefore be it resolved that I would like to thank snow removal crews, mechanics, and supervisors from the Department of Public Works, municipalities, and private contractors for their hard work over the past weeks.

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 Seniors and Long-term Care.

RESOLUTION NO. 915

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

Whereas the Province of Nova Scotia recognizes February as African Heritage Month to celebrate the dynamic culture and rich heritage of the province's African Nova Scotian communities; and

Whereas during the Second World War, dozens of Black Nova Scotian patriots stepped up to be a part of the Halifax Civil Emergency Corps, and fulfill the duties of police and firefighters for the Halifax region, as well as lead efforts to ensure its well-being and readiness in the event of an enemy attack to act as home guards; and

Whereas we must remember those civilian groups who ensured the safety and security of Halifax during wartime, such as the Home Guard Platoon 7E;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature join me in extending our gratitude to these unsung heroes and to thank the Army Museum at the Halifax Citadel for highlighting important stories like this.

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. 404 - An Act to Reform the Law Respecting Energy and Electricity. (Hon. Tory Rushton)

Bill No. 405 - An Act to Reduce the Harmonized Sales Tax. (Hon. Zach Churchill)

Bill No. 406 - An Act to Amend Chapter 217 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Income Tax Act, Respecting the Indexing of Tax Brackets. (Lisa Lachance)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Before I introduce the bill, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, you may.

JOHN LOHR: In the East Gallery, I'm very pleased to be able to introduce today a number of people from Antigonish County and Town: first of all, the Warden of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish, Owen McCarron; Mayor of the Town of Antigonish, Laurie Boucher; Deputy Warden of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish, Bill MacFarlane; Deputy Mayor of the Town of Antigonish, William Cormier; and CAO of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish, Glenn Horne. Appreciate they have travelled here to be with us today in Halifax. Very appreciative of their presence. (Applause)

Bill No. 407 - An Act to Consolidate the Town of Antigonish and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish. (Hon. John Lohr)

Bill No. 408 - An Act to Establish a Provincial School Lunch Program. (Hon. Derek Mombourquette)

Bill No. 409 - An Act to Amend Chapter 217 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Income Tax Act to Reduce Income Tax. (Fred Tilley)

Bill No. 410 - An Act Respecting the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. (Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 411 - An Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 2000, the Employment Support and Income Assistance Act, Respecting Equal Support for the Unhoused. (Claudia Chender)

Bill No. 412 - An Act to Amend Chapter 401 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Residential Tenancies Act, Respecting Administration and Enforcement. (Braedon Clark)

[1:30 p.m.]

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you, Speaker. Before I read my Notice of Motion, may I make an introduction?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, you may.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you. I'd like to welcome to the House today Jo Franklin, a strength and unity supporter of Can't Buy My Silence - please stand as I mention your names - Liz LeClair, supporter and organizer of Can't Buy My Silence; Jennifer Graves, supporter of Can't Buy My Silence; Kristina Fifield, trauma counsellor and adviser to the Mass Casualty Commission; and other supporters. Thank you all for being here today in the House.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 916

Whereas the CBC 6:00 p.m. news on January 23, 2024 aired phone-recorded comments of the Speaker stating: "It is reckless of the member of Cumberland North to continue to use the victim and her family and her friends for her own agenda . . ."

THE SPEAKER: Order. Please continue.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you, Speaker. I'll start again.

Whereas the CBC 6:00 p.m. news on January 23, 2024, aired phone-recorded comments of the Speaker stating: "It is reckless of the member of Cumberland North to continue to use the victim and her family and her friends for her own agenda. Her statements are egregious, and they are to no benefit to anyone but her own political gain."; and

Whereas the vice-president of the Progressive Conservative Party contacted Kathryn and Michael Saxton on January 23, 2024, and requested them to meet privately with the Speaker and former president of the PC Party after they filed sworn affidavits in court; and

Whereas the role of the Speaker must, at all times, show and be seen to show the impartiality required to sustain the trust and goodwill of the House and in order to protect the impartiality of the Office of the Speaker, the Speaker abstains from all partisan political activity.

Therefore be it resolved this House censure the Speaker, for she has breached my privilege of freedom from obstruction and interference and intimidation by showing partiality against me and displayed a lack of impartiality in partisan actions outside of the House.

I also request to move a motion to have the Internal Affairs Committee investigate and report to the House on their findings.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

There are several Noes.

The notice of motion has been tabled.

Are there any further notices of motion?

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

SEARL, DANIEL: BLAQK GOLD PROJECT AWD. - CONGRATS.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Eastern Passage's Daniel Searl for his recent recognition by the Blaqk Gold Project. He was recognized for his many wonderful accomplishments over the years. Daniel shares a passion for youth development that began when he was a youth himself, advocating for a local skate park and as a lead in his high school's global youth project.

Daniel is the founder of the Forgotten Years, a play-based learning program embracing entrepreneurial endeavours. He is also proud to lead the Afrocentric parenting program Nurturing Strong African Nova Scotian Families here in HRM.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in congratulating Daniel Searl of Eastern Passage on his truly inspirational work.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

SURETTE, JUSTIN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I rise today to recognize the loss of a young man in the riding of Yarmouth, Justin Surette. Justin was known for his kind nature, witty humour and love for his family and friends. Over the years he was passionate about boxing and was an avid hockey player, where he formed incredible friendships with his teammates and their families.

After battling with addiction and mental illness, Justin passed away peacefully at his home earlier this month. He was a warrior through all the obstacles brought his way and found his strength in his family, especially the bond he had with his mother, Tina.

Speaker, I want to offer my condolences to Justin's friends and family, especially his parents, Greg and Tina, and his brother Jacob, as they deal with the most unimaginable loss to their family. I know I speak on behalf of all of Yarmouth when I say we will miss Justin and will continue to work on better supports for those dealing with addictions and mental illness.

I know that the Yarmouth Regional Hospital has already made some changes as a result of Justin's case, which hopefully will ensure that the lives of others who are dealing with similar challenges are not lost.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

ETTER, REV. ALISON: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, we mark with sorrow the passing of Reverend Alison Etter at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital on February 14th at the age of 41. Alison Etter was a beloved minister of the United Church of Canada serving the congregations of Knox in Glace Bay and Warden in New Aberdeen. She had previously served at United Heritage Church in Sydney and with the congregations in Forks Baddeck and Middle River.

Alison's life's work linked faith with community development, cultures, the environment and social justice. She was chair of the United Church of Canada's Committee on Theology and Interchurch and Interfaith Relations and was convenor for Cape Breton KAIROS, the ecumenical organization for peace and justice. She was deeply committed to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and under her leadership, Greenwood United Church in Baddeck became the first affirming congregation in Cape Breton.

We direct our thoughts and sympathy to her son, Oliver, husband, Tom, and parents, Catherine and David, as we deeply acknowledge in this House Nova Scotia's diminishment by her passing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

ORGANIZERS: BLMG - RECOG.

HON. TWILA GROSSE: Speaker, I rise today to recognize the organizers of the Black Lives Matter *Golf* (BLMG): Darren Tolliver, Doug Hill, Duan Ash and Channing Colley.

On August 22, 2020, BLMG was formed at Eaglequest Grandview Golf & Country Club, in the historic Black community of East Preston. BLMG has achieved recognition in both local and national media and was awarded Community Sport Organization of the Year for 2021-22 by the provincial sport organization Support4Sport.

BLMG's mission is to make golf a more inclusive sport for Black, Indigenous people and People of Colour by advancing four key initiatives: Junior Mentorship Program, BIPOC women's program, Femtorship Program, a scholarship program of \$10,000 annually and the Black Lives Matter *Golf* Invitational Tournament, held in August with 120 participants.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to please join me in congratulating these gentlemen for a job well done. We look forward to good things happening in the future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

LAWLOR, LARA: NSTT AWD. RECIP. - RECOG.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lara Lawlor of Prospect. Lara is a recipient of the Janice Merritt Flemming Award gifted by the Nova Scotia Talent Trust. The NSTT is a non-profit, registered charity that provides scholarships to Nova Scotians who demonstrate exceptional potential and commitment to become established artists in their chosen field.

Janice Flemming served on the Nova Scotia Talent Trust's board for 23 years while making significant contributions within the dance community. This award was established to support ballet dancers and is more than merely financial support. It is an affirmation that recipients are gifted artists and provides financial support for recipients to pursue their dreams and access a team of mentors, other dancers, choreographers, and teachers to help become a professional dancer.

I'd like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Lara for receiving this prestigious award through her commitment, time, dedication, and passion to become a professional ballet dancer.

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

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

In the gallery opposite, I want to recognize that Hugh Gillis, First Vice President of NSGEU, Danielle Sampson from the Canadian Labour Congress, and Mat Whynott from the CLC are with us.

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

WINNERS: 2024 NS REST. AWDS. RECIPS. - CONGRATS

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise today to congratulate a number of Dartmouth South restaurants that were honoured with the 2024 Nova Scotia Restaurant Awards: Dear Friend Bar, Oxalis Restaurant, and newcomer to Portland Street Vandal Doughnuts. All diverse in their offerings, but all laser-focused on their amazing food.

Dear Friend, winner of the Best Beverages Award, is the go-to spot for an outstanding cocktail. Anyone who's been there knows that Oxalis, winner of Best Restaurant in HRM, is truly a special experience. Vandal Doughnuts, an HRM modern classic and winner of the Best Limited Service Award, captured everyone's hearts with their colourful, sugary creations.

Leaning into what makes them unique has brought these restaurants a dedicated local following and well-deserved recognition from the Restaurant Association of Nova

Scotia. Congratulations to all the winners, and I hope to see all members of this House in Dartmouth on Portland Street to support these amazing local businesses.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

ACHFC: 1ST OFFICIAL GALA - CONGRATS.

HON. GREG MORROW: Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Afrikan Canadian Heritage Friendship Centre on their first official gala to celebrate African Heritage Month. The Afrikan Canadian Heritage Friendship Centre's located at Chedabucto Education Centre/Guysborough Academy under its program leader, Patsy Borden.

The evening brought together residents from Sunnyville, Lincolnville, Upper Big Tracadie, and Guysborough for the celebration. The event also highlighted local musical talent, some fantastic food, and insightful words from community members, as well as a special video message from the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

This event certainly showed the true spirit of this year's theme: Our Smiles, Our Joy, Our Resilience as African Nova Scotians. Patsy and her team of volunteers spent much time organizing, decorating, and hosting this year's celebration. They're all to be commended on a successful evening.

I ask that members of the House join me in congratulating Patsy Borden and her team of volunteers for a wonderful evening as we look forward to celebrating African Heritage Month next year at their 2025 gala.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

TURNER, LEWIS: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. KELLY REGAN: Speaker, I'd like to note the passing of a true son of Bedford, the late Lewis Turner.

Lewis passed away in January at the age of 95 following a life spent happily and entirely in Bedford. After a childhood spent hunting and fishing, he married his beloved June and raised a family while engaged in a 38-year career with MT&T. Along the way, he volunteered for many years with our local firefighters. He served as our fire chief.

Lewis also chronicled our community with his camera for decades. He was up early, at the crack of dawn, snapping photos even into his 90s. He was an integral part of the Scott Manor House and Bedford United Church communities. Lewis was shy yet outgoing. He just went about his life putting a smile on the faces of those he met. I'm so glad I was able to present him with the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal for his volunteer service.

In his final days, Lewis marvelled at the kindness of his beloved Bedford - people taking him for treatments, bringing him meals, and visiting with him. They were simply returning the joy he'd brought to their lives. He was a really lovely man, and I will miss him.

[1:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

BLACK ICE SOCIETY: CHLM MEM. GAME - THANKS

SUSAN LEBLANC: On February 17th I was in the stands at the RBC Centre in Burnside for the annual Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes Memorial Game.

The game featured two all-Black teams representing the historic Amherst Royals and the Hammonds Plains Mossbacks. This year, the teams were coached by two hockey giants: Bill Riley, the first Black Nova Scotian to play in the NHL, and former Team Canada player and Hockey Hall of Famer - the first woman to be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame - Angela James.

James lent her considerable talents to a youth hockey clinic before the game. The annual game was organized by the Black Ice Society, a Nova Scotia-based non-profit that recognizes and showcases Black achievement in sport.

Founded in 1895 and playing off and on until 1930, the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes consisted of 400 players of African descent on teams throughout the region. The league's maiden team was in fact the Dartmouth Jubilees.

In these last few days of African Heritage Month, I ask the House to join me in thanking the Black Ice Society for their efforts to ensure that the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes is not lost to history and congratulate all involved.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

MACPHEE, MARGARET: 109TH BIRTHDAY - BEST WISHES

HON. KEITH BAIN: On February 9, 2024, I was pleased to attend the 109th birthday of Margaret MacPhee at Alderwood Rest Home in Baddeck. I was also pleased to be joined by Warden Bruce Morrison and Councillor Perla MacLeod.

Imagine: At 109, Margaret is recognized as the twelfth-oldest person in Canada. In my remarks, I mentioned that half Margaret's age is just under 55, and each of us knows others that didn't even make it to that age. She is a remarkable lady for sure. Her sight and mobility might be failing, but her mind is clearer than many - including mine.

She certainly hasn't lost her wit. We're reminded of the interview she had on her last birthday. When asked by the interviewer about her secret to longevity, in typical Margaret fashion she quickly replied, "If I told you, it wouldn't be a secret anymore." Margaret is loved by many, including me.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in wishing a happy birthday to this sweet lady.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

PLOW OPERATORS: HARD WORK - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: As we all know, we had a historic storm in Cape Breton, specifically in the CBRM, in the last number of weeks. I rise in my place because each and every time there is an event like this, our first responders always step up to the plate to make sure that they do whatever they can to keep the community safe. I specifically want to recognize plow operators, whether they were with the province, whether they were with the city, whether they were a private contractor, whether they came from out of province to come and support the community.

We had ambulances stuck everywhere trying to get people to the hospital. We had medical professionals trying to get to the hospital. We had pharmacists trying to get to work. We had everybody who was in the community trying to support individuals. The way they got there, and the only reason they got there, is because those plow operators made sure those roads were clear. They worked day in and day out, 24-hour shifts, and they're still working today to clean up in the greater Sydney area.

I rise in my place today, proud of all of them. Cape Bretoners stepped up again, but specifically this time, without our plow operators, I don't know where our community would be now.

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

SADLER, DR. MARK: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

LISA LACHANCE: Next month, March, is Epilepsy Awareness Month in Nova Scotia. Before we returned to this House, Halifax Citadel-Sable Island and the epilepsy community across Nova Scotia lost an amazing neurologist. Dr. Mark Sadler passed away shortly before the new year and leaves behind a remarkable legacy.

Dr. Sadler was an epilepsy specialist who inspired a new generation of neurologists to pursue the specialty. He set up the province's first epilepsy monitoring unit in 1988, and from then on, he was a close ally and friend to hundreds of families, whether it was casting a second pair of eyes on a tough-to-read EKG or handing out cupcakes in a purple lab coat

at the Halifax Infirmary for Epilepsy Awareness Month. Many patients and their loved ones will feel this loss.

I ask my fellow members to join me in honouring Dr. Mark Sadler's memory and his decades of contributions to epilepsy research and treatment.

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

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I beg leave to make an introduction before I read my statement.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I notice sitting in the Gallery today three members from my community: Angela Miniotas; her daughter; and Karen Sawler. I just want to give a warm welcome to them, from us to Chester-St. Margaret's. (Applause)

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

VOLUNTEERS: NEW ROSS RINK - THANKS

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I rise today to recognize New Ross Rink. This is a volunteer-run outdoor rink located in the community of New Ross.

Established by community volunteers, the rink is a great addition to the community during the Winter months. This year marks the fifth year that the rink has been in operation. Many members of the community and surrounding areas come to take part in activities including skating, ice hockey, and sledge hockey.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in thanking the volunteers who run the New Ross Rink.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

CONRAD, DONNA: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. KEITH IRVING: One thing that is often overlooked about the importance of a vibrant small business sector is how much they can give back to our communities. A terrific example of this in the Annapolis Valley is Donna Conrad, a RE/MAX real estate agent who's been the driving force behind the Stockings Were Hung project.

Since 2011, Donna and a team of volunteers have collected, organized, and distributed Christmas stocking items for children and youth in the Annapolis, Kings, and Hants Counties. Donna also runs the youth camps during the Summer - Camp Kindness,

which promotes leadership and kindness to others through sport and art. Love and support of children are the core values of these impactful programs.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in thanking Donna Conrad for her caring and generous community spirit and for all that she does for the young people in our communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

BORDEN, GLORIA: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to pay homage to Ms. Gloria Borden from New Glasgow. She became one of the first Black Nova Scotian laboratory technicians. During her 30 years in the field, Borden was one of the first Black women to have her name associated with a science project and paper which was presented at the Canadian Congress of Laboratory Medicine. This paper dealt with detecting lymphomas at an early stage.

Borden also carries the distinction of being the first Black female manager, promoter, trainer, and judge in amateur boxing in North America. She obtained her licence in 1971. In recognition of her dedication to helping prepare local and invited amateur boxers for the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, Borden was named one of the top Black women in Canada.

Miss Gloria was a remarkable lady, and I send all my condolences to the members of her family. I would like her to rest in power.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

ZINCK, MIKE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the profound sense of loss our community is feeling following the sudden death of our longtime funeral director and friend Mike Zinck.

For more than 30 years, we have all, and always, looked to Mike to help us through the dark days that follow the death of someone we love.

It was more than his consummate professionalism or the fastidiousness with which he approached every detail of service and remembrance. In that, we could certainly take comfort. But really, it was the incredible feeling of compassion that he extended to each and every grieving family, like a warm blanket around our shoulders.

Now it is time for our community to pay forward Mike's gifts and support his husband J.D., his mother Bea, his siblings and beloved nephews and nieces, and of course

his team at Dana L. Sweeny Funeral Home at this time of loss. For his legacy of love, Mike deserves nothing less.

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

CLAYTON PARK W. MLA: ACHIEVEMENTS - RECOG.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Speaker, I rise today to recognize a member of this Chamber who recently faced illness with determination and grace, and that is the member for Clayton Park West.

I have watched her, since she was elected in 2017, represent her constituents with passion and determination, and even as she went through treatments for breast cancer, that never stopped. She never missed a beat. She continued to be there for her constituents, and she champions for all of those who are struggling and facing breast cancer.

I think it's important on this first day of our Spring session that we recognize her achievements and we thank her for everything she's done. (Standing ovation)

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

AFRICAN HER. MO.: CELEB. OF CULTURE - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, I rise to recognize African Heritage Month. This year's theme, Our Smiles, Our Joy, Our Resilience as African Nova Scotians, presents an opportunity to celebrate the centuries of contribution of African Nova Scotians across Nova Scotia. African Nova Scotians have been a part of our province's culture for centuries, and deserve to be recognized and celebrated.

My community of Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier has two historical Black communities: New Waterford and Whitney Pier.

Since 2008, the African Heritage Month Proclamation in CBRM has continued to grow. It has grown so much that it outgrew its original venue at the civic centre and is now held at Centre 200. This year was standing room only for the proclamation's sweet 16th anniversary. Thank you to the organizers and participants for another successful African Heritage Month Proclamation, with excellent community spirit reflecting this year's theme.

We must celebrate African heritage not just one month a year - we must celebrate 365 days a year and 366 on the leap year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

LOUISBOURG LIGHTHOUSE: 100TH ANNIV. - RECOG.

HON. BRIAN COMER: Speaker, I rise today to celebrate one of the most beloved structures in my constituency. This year is the 100th anniversary of the beautiful Louisbourg lighthouse overlooking the historic fortress and harbour. The current lighthouse is a twin of the Georges Island lighthouse in Halifax Harbour.

For its anniversary year, the beacon is receiving \$1.3 million of a facelift. The adjacent hiking trail is also receiving \$158,000 from the province to improve the visitor experience. I encourage everyone to visit this magnificent site to learn more about the history and enjoy the rugged coastline.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

CHINESE NEW YEAR: CELEB. - RECOG.

BRAEDON CLARK: Speaker, 2024 is the Year of the Dragon. Earlier this month, I was thrilled to attend a Lunar New Year event hosted by the Chinese Society of Nova Scotia and the Chinese Benevolent Association of Nova Scotia. Chinese New Year is a time to celebrate family, honour ancestors, and gather for a meal. The Chinese calendar dates back to the 14th century BC and is associated with the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac.

Those born in the Year of the Dragon, like babies born this year, are believed to be ambitious, energetic and charismatic, often inspiring others with their passion, enthusiasm and leadership. Speaker, I was born in 1988 (interruptions) - also a Year of the Dragon - so there must be some mistake in the list of qualities I just mentioned. (Laughter) I would ask all MLAs to join me in wishing all who celebrate a safe, happy and prosperous Year of the Dragon.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MEMBERS: CAN'T BUY MY SILENCE - RECOG.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCROSSIN: Speaker, today I rise to give thanks to the tireless efforts of the members of the Can't Buy My Silence organization and all the other supporters who are trying to remove legislation around NDAs, silencing the victims of sexual assault.

As if sexual assault was not enough, many victims go on to be shamed into believing that no one will believe them if they report the criminal activity and bring it to light. With the shaming often comes silencing. The silencing of victims through signing of non-disclosure agreements in exchange for money is legal in this province, and it's still legal because we allow it in this Legislature.

Too many people are turning their backs on victims of sexual assault. Victims of sexual assault have told me time and time again they need us to be their voice. Criminal activity should be investigated, and not be allowed to be hidden away by cash and NDAs. Thank you to the members of Can't Buy My Silence for your work. I give you my word that we will stand with you and fight against legislation that silences the victims of sexual assault.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MOBILE FOOD MKT.: NEW LOCATION - CONGRATS.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, people in Dartmouth North now have another option for buying low-cost produce. The Mobile Food Market has set up a permanent location in Saint Anthony Church at 26 Courtney Road. The Mobile Food Market has transformed this space into a warm and welcoming spot.

Tables are arranged in rows and on market days the produce is laid out in bins on the tables. Shoppers move up and down the rows, pick what they need, and pay at the cash register. The market is open each Tuesday from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and takes cash, credit and debit. There's also an area to sit, have a cup of coffee or tea and a chat, and a kids' corner with lots of fun activities for the little ones.

Since opening on January 23rd, there has been a consistent turnout of about 80 people each week. As we see the cost of everything go up, especially groceries, the timing of this new market couldn't be better. I ask the House to join me in extending congratulations and thanks to the Mobile Food Market for this much-needed service in Dartmouth North.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The time is now 2:00 p.m. We will finish at 2:50 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: TAXES - CUT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: "For me, the bottom line is that people need to have more money in their pockets so they can afford the things they need to live." These aren't my words; these are the words of the Premier when he was the Leader of the Opposition. However, over the last two years, this Premier has overseen this province going from being one of the most affordable places to live in the country to one of the most expensive, where the prices for food, goods, and rent have gone up much greater than any other part of the

country. We still pay the highest taxes despite the fact that this Premier has collected record revenues in taxes and revenues: \$3.4 billion, unexpected over the last two years.

[2:00 p.m.]

My question to the Premier is: Will he make good on his word to help Nova Scotians have more money in their pockets and cut the HST?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): I thank the member for this important question. Obviously, our government has shown we're always investing in Nova Scotians. We've tabled two deficit budgets so far - huge investments in health care, huge investments in housing, huge investments in Nova Scotians. We will continue to make sure that we invest in Nova Scotians. We'll look for ways to address the affordability challenges that Nova Scotians and all Canadians, quite frankly, are facing. We accept that. We accept that we'll continue to look for ways to make life a little more affordable for Nova Scotians.

ZACH CHURCHILL: The Premier is right. He's spending more money, but results in health care are getting worse. Results in housing are getting worse. Poverty is on the rise again in Nova Scotia. Food insecurity is on the rise, and we have not had a government that has actually kept to their word and put more money back in the pockets of people.

This Premier said in Opposition: "You can't live in this province and not feel for people that are the working poor. You have to feel for them, you have to look for ways to improve their quality of life, and that's what I'm all about." This is a Premier who has frozen income assistance for two years; who has not invested in a universal lunch program, although there's federal money available; who has overseen the rise of homelessness, poverty, and food insecurity from one end of the province to the other; who has cut back rental supplements for people who are facing the highest increases in rent in the country; and he has not provided any relief to Nova Scotians. When can we expect that relief to come?

THE PREMIER: The investments we've made in Nova Scotians, specifically around affordability, the member may overlook them, but: raising the Nova Scotia Child Benefit twice; reducing the cost of child care; more funding for people with disabilities; encouraging more housing construction; a plan to build more public housing, more affordable housing. We have been investing in Nova Scotians: the improvements to the Heating Assistance Rebate Program; more funding for people administering the programs.

We will continue to look for ways to invest in Nova Scotians. We are investing in, as the member said, record amounts of investments in Nova Scotians. I'm proud of the work this government is doing, and we will continue to invest in Nova Scotians.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I would argue this government is not investing in Nova Scotians. They're investing in headlines. They're investing in optics while the results in

every single metric that matters to people in this province - how much poverty we have, how much food insecurity we have, how much access to primary health care we have, how much homelessness we have - are getting worse.

Whether you talk to a fixed-income senior, a working family, or someone who is financially insecure, everybody is feeling the squeeze right now. Everybody's feeling the burden of the highest taxes in the country. Will this Premier cut taxes so Nova Scotians are no longer paying the highest income in sales taxes in the entire country?

THE PREMIER: When you look at the budgets, we've tabled deficit budgets - two in a row. Another significant budget will come this week. When you cut taxes - and of course, everyone wants to cut taxes - something has to give. There's a trade-off. I would ask the member: What would he trade off? But I don't have to ask him, because I knew what they cut when they were in government. They cut health care. They cut investments in Nova Scotians. We will not do that.

We're clear and transparent with Nova Scotians on what we're investing in, and I ask the Opposition if they would be a little clear and transparent about where their money goes. When I talk about money in the pockets of Nova Scotians, I mean money in the pockets of Nova Scotians, not my Liberal friends who steal from Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The Leader of the New Democratic Party.

PREM.: HOGAN COURT PROJECT COST - PROVIDE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: While we're talking about spending money, Speaker, in the wake of the Auditor General's scathing report on this government's mismanagement of the Hogan Court project, the Premier stated he was focused on value for patients instead of value for money.

As an accountant, I am surprised that the Premier doesn't recognize that those are the same thing. Money doesn't grow on trees, and while this government is overspending on a hotel and throwing around millions in untendered contracts, we are seeing a record-high family doctor wait-list and massive increases in ambulance wait times and ER closures - not numbers we want to go up.

When can Nova Scotians expect a stop to questionable financial procurements and a start to fixing health care?

THE PREMIER: Nova Scotians have a right to expect that the care they need will be there when they need it. That's why we're making these investments. The needle is moving in a number of metrics, for sure. I hear that from Nova Scotians, I hear that from health care providers. We will continue to do that.

I would just say to the member that I won't apologize for investing in health care. I won't apologize for moving forward. What the member refers to as a hotel is actually going to be a health care facility that sees patients two years quicker than would otherwise happen.

We understand the importance of investing in health care, and we won't apologize for doing it.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Okay, reality check: In light of the huge wait times to enter long-term care, Hogan Court was pitched as a way to redirect long-term care patients out of hospital beds. It was planned to accommodate 75 to 80 - we saw lots of announcements on that - and it was going to open last month. But because this government ignored the expert report - I'll table that - and failed to assess the massive amount of renovation that would be required for this project, it's now been delayed by several months at best, will have significantly fewer beds, and will no longer be able to support high-needs patients.

Can the Premier explain why, instead of more health care faster, we are quite literally getting less health care, slower?

THE PREMIER: We are the Party of more, faster. Nova Scotians know their options on less, slower and they sit across the opposite aisle from us.

This facility will open two years quicker than it would have under another track and it will accommodate 68 patients. I can tell you, anyone who has lived in a hospital for months on end, years on end, knows that this will be a much more suitable, much more appropriate health care living environment. It's a good thing for Nova Scotians, and I ask the member opposite to stand with Nova Scotians on this issue.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: The Premier is right about one thing: It isn't a hotel; it was the shell of an unfinished hotel that this government spent a record \$35 million on. I will table that.

This bad deal has very real consequences for Nova Scotians. The Premier is right about that too, but I differ on what those consequences are. For ill seniors who are not only footing the bill but are still waiting for adequate access to health care, the consequences are dire.

Hogan Court is now set to open by the end of 2024 - almost a full year after it was supposed to. What is unclear is just how big a price tag Hogan Court will have when it's all said and done.

Can the Premier tell us today what that price tag is and who benefits? It is certainly not the elderly Nova Scotians waiting in hospital for long-term care.

THE PREMIER: I completely disagree. The people who benefit from the investments this government makes are Nova Scotians, and we are not ashamed to invest in them. We will continue to invest in Nova Scotians, and we will do it in record numbers because that's what Nova Scotians have a right to expect from their government.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

FTB: ADDITIONAL TAX REVENUE - RETURN

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, the Premier says they don't have enough money to reduce taxes in Nova Scotia at the same time that he has collected \$3.4 billion in additional taxes and revenues that were even actually unexpected by the Treasury.

He asked me what we would cut if we were in government. I'd say we would cut all the frivolous vanity projects that this government has spent tens of millions of dollars on. Health care is broken - don't worry, we have an app for that. We have homelessness - don't worry, we have an app for that.

We have an app for that. We have homelessness? Don't worry, we have an app for that. This government has spent tens of millions of dollars on untendered contracts on phone apps that are doing nothing to fix the emergency room problem, that are doing nothing to fix homelessness, and that are giving no money back to Nova Scotians.

My question to the Premier: Will he use the extra additional tax revenue he has to reduce the highest taxes that we have in the country and give that money back to Nova Scotians who are struggling to make ends meet under his leadership?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: There is no question our province has seen significant revenue increases, because we had an economy that was performing better than was expected, and that went beyond everybody's expectations. That went beyond our department's expectations. It went beyond the big financial institutions across the country - their expectations. Academic institutions here in Atlantic Canada - even the Auditor General looked at our revenue projections and said, Yes, those appear to be reasonable.

Yes, we did come in to a lot more money, Speaker, and where did we spend it? We spent it on things like health care. We spent it on things like housing. (Applause)

ZACH CHURCHILL: The record speaks for itself, Speaker. The statistics are there. Look at them. Poverty increasing. Home insecurity increasing. Food insecurity increasing. Regular, everyday working Nova Scotians are struggling to make ends meet and falling behind, whether they're a fixed-income senior, a working family, or young people who are coming up.

And this is a government - I will say where they're not spending, which is on the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee that was promised to Nova Scotians. This government promised on the front of their platform: We will give every single Nova Scotian working in the private sector a better paycheque. Nova Scotians' hard-earned dollars are actually going a lot less far than they were two years ago. My question to the Premier: What happened to the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition is calling for a tax cut, and yet he's also saying Nova Scotians have significant needs at this point in time. What kind of government would offer a tax cut at a time when we need those very sources of revenue to help people with the higher cost of living, and to help fix a health care system that his own previous government left in shambles?

We are choosing to use these revenues to help fix the health care system. We're using them to help people find housing, and to increase the supply of housing. We're helping people deal with the aftermath of extreme weather events. All of these things are important. We believe in those investments.

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

FTB: TAXES - REDUCE

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and the Premier brag about how much money they're spending to help people. Look at the statistics of the health care system: twice as many people without a family doctor; wait times that are now twice above the national average; more people dying in our emergency rooms.

Let's look at the societal statistics: poverty increasing - worst in the country here; food insecurity on the rise. Everybody is struggling to make ends meet. The point that we're making on this side of the House is that we think Nova Scotians can spend that money a lot more wisely than the government can, clearly. My question to the Premier and the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board: They are allegedly fiscal conservatives; when will they actually show us they are and give some money back to Nova Scotians, so that working people can have more money in their pockets?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, this is a rhetoric that 35,000 health care workers will be very familiar with from the member opposite. This is what I hear.

I hear 1 per cent capital reduction in all of long-term care budgets, as a result of balancing the budget on the backs of seniors in this province in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. I hear about unfair bargaining practices where people were allowed to walk around this facility and not have a fair bargaining process, as a result of balancing the budget on the backs of unionized employees in this province.

I think about the emergency department in Yarmouth: They have languished and waited for four, five, six years, and this government is the government that invested in that. (Applause)

[2:15 p.m.]

ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, what about the fixed-income seniors who can't pay their bills right now, and can't pay their property taxes? What about the working family who has two sets of incomes coming in and still can't afford to send their kids to sports or pay for their hockey gear? What about the young person coming up who sees that they're not going to have the same chances at owning a home or even finding an apartment, who are living in their parents' basements because they don't see a future here and they can't afford to live right now?

What about these people who are struggling each and every day to make ends meet and they're falling behind? These people would benefit from not paying the highest taxes in the country. I'm sorry that this government doesn't see it.

When will they actually start addressing the fiscal pressures, the financial stress that middle-class and working-class people are dealing with right now each and every day?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: It's interesting that the member brings up the property tax cost for seniors, because wasn't it his own government that looked to get rid of the property tax cap? I remember that.

We were approached as the Official Opposition to join in. The government wanted us to join in, but we refused to. Do you know why? It was because it was the PC Party that started the property tax cap. It was put into place to protect the very people the member is speaking about: seniors who are trying to stay in their homes and deal with higher property taxes.

Could you imagine their property taxes, Speaker, if they didn't have the cap on it the last few years?

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

SNS: HARP CUTS - EXPLAIN

LORELEI NICOLL: Speaker, the cost of living remains, as we all agree I believe, at an all-time high. Yet this government is not supporting Nova Scotians who need help the most to pay for their essentials including heat. Instead, they are cutting supports for people who need help heating their homes.

This government cut the Heating Assistance Rebate Program from \$1,000 to \$600. At Community Services Committee, I witnessed the Deputy Minister of Community Services say: “At the end of the day, we provide options, and government needs to make the decision, which they have.” I’ll table that.

My question to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia: Why, in this cost of living crisis, would this government make the decision to cut the HARP when people need help the most?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: We know that many Nova Scotians are facing tough times right now. That’s why we continue as a government to make strategic and targeted investments for Nova Scotians through a number of different channels.

That includes the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. We did increase that up to a one-time top-up of \$1,000 last year. We are the first government, in fact, that has actually touched that program and tripled it to \$600 from the original \$200.

Make no mistake, we know that Nova Scotians are struggling. We are committed to supporting them. That’s why HARP, the Home Energy Assistance Top-up Fund, property tax rebates for seniors, the Seniors Care Grant, the Your Energy Rebate Program - there are a number of solutions that we are implementing. We’ll continue to listen to Nova Scotians.

LORELEI NICOLL: Another heating program that this government cut is the Home Energy Assistance Top-up Fund administered by the Salvation Army.

In 2021, in response to the pandemic and the high cost of living, eligibility was expanded so people could apply every 12 months instead of 24 months. However, this government decided to reverse the decision for this critical fund and reduce eligibility back to every 24 months for the most vulnerable Nova Scotians.

My question to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia: How can they justify cutting yet another heating fund for our most vulnerable Nova Scotians during this cost of living crisis?

COLTON LEBLANC: Prior to the program of 2023, it was agreed by all three parties, the government, the Salvation Army, as well as Nova Scotia Power that the program parameters and admission criteria would go back to the pre-pandemic criteria.

I do want to emphasize that the HEAT program is different from HARP. It’s not to be a copycat of that exact same program. HARP, unlike HEAT, will continue to support Nova Scotians even though the budget near ran out. Reverting back to the program changes of ’23 ensures that more Nova Scotians are eligible.

Across government, we continue to look at our programs and services for opportunities to support Nova Scotians.

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

ECC: COASTAL PROTECTION ACT SCRAPPED - EXPLAIN

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, yesterday the government announced that the Coastal Protection Act was canned, and that they are abdicating their responsibility on coastal protection to municipalities and to all Nova Scotians. Municipalities have been clear that they want direction and leadership from this Province on this to avoid a patchwork of regulations and the unfair off-loading of labour and costs onto municipalities. I'll table that.

Hurricanes, floods, fires, extreme Winter weather - climate change is here. Why is this government abdicating their responsibility on this important issue?

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Speaker, in no way, shape, or form is this government abandoning or abrogating our responsibilities when it comes to climate change. We are a province in Canada that has the only climate change targets legislated. We have our first climate plan since 2009. When these parties were in power, where were their climate plans? We have the first risk assessment since 2005. We have the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund. And now we have the coastal action plan that supports private property owners, that supports municipalities, and of course, immediate resources being deployed for coastal action.

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, through the endless rounds of consultation meant to strengthen the eventual Act, we know that a majority of Nova Scotians, as well as several towns and municipalities, supported the Coastal Protection Act and called for it to be proclaimed, yet the minister chose to ignore this overwhelming majority. From over here, it looks like the minister chose to prioritize the interests of a minority of developers over the concerns of average citizens.

Will this government release a full report on the consultation process that led to the scrapping of the Coastal Protection Act?

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, we have forged a terrific relationship with our municipalities through all the things we've done - the renegotiation of the MOU. In terms of the coastal protection action plan, the reality is that we see this as a partnership. We will be providing a number of things to our municipalities. We'll be providing flood-line mapping and example bylaws. There will be a very direct line right back to us.

It's not that we're abrogating our responsibilities. The reality is, it's an extraordinarily complicated question. The municipalities know their own communities best. In some cases, we have to fight the ocean. In some cases, we have to retreat. In some

cases, we have to hold fast. That's very granular, right on the local level. We have very different circumstances, from rocky shores to highly erodible shores to very low tides and very high tides. This is a recognition of the complexity of this situation.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

EECD: UNIVERSAL SCHOOL LUNCH PGM. - ESTABLISH

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Speaker, at a committee meeting just last month, Nick Jennery, the executive director of Feed Nova Scotia, said that a third of people going to food banks are kids under the age of 18. We also have food banks in our network that discreetly deliver food to schools to the teachers to be discreetly distributed, because there are some kids who just don't have food. Teachers are all too aware that kids can't learn and listen if they are hungry. That doesn't line up with what the minister and Premier have said multiple times in this House: that no child goes to school hungry.

It is shameful that our food banks have to worry about discreetly giving food to schools because this government won't act. Again, one-third of people going to food banks are under the age of 18.

My question to the minister: Does the minister think that it is acceptable to have food banks discreetly fund schools to make sure that kids get fed because this government won't create a universal lunch program?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: We understand very well the importance of access to food in schools. We've been committed to increasing access to food in schools since taking office. That's why we've introduced new programs to ensure that our students have access to food in schools, like the salad bar program and the fruit bowl program. That's why we've increased funding into schools, and into the regions to support access to food in schools. That's why we've advocated at every opportunity with our federal partners to support us in this work, because we know very well how important it is to have access to food in schools.

Speaker, we started this work when we took office, and we are continuing with this work. We are continuing to expand access to food in schools, and we are not stopping.

IAIN RANKIN: Relying on the federal government is a tired excuse. In the last few days of the Fall House session, we learned that Newfoundland and Labrador expanded their lunch program to all schools in the province. Since then, Manitoba announced that they too will be implementing a universal lunch program.

Yet kids in Nova Scotia are not being afforded the same opportunities because this government likes to blame everyone else and not take responsibility for anything. Other

provincial governments are stepping up and helping families. Why won't this government do the same?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: As we continue to do the work to expand access to food in schools, it's important that we do acknowledge the contributions of our school staff, our volunteers in community, our partnerships, and others who contribute now to school food programs. Those folks are essential for the provision of food in schools, and the provision of food in schools is about nutrition - yes, that's incredibly important - but it's about so much more than nutrition.

It's also about building community relationships and strengthening community partnerships. It's about building health habits, and it's about infusing local cultural and innovative approaches to food in schools. I want to say thank you to the folks who have been doing that and who are continuing to work with us as we work to expand access to food in schools for our students.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

FTB: BRACKET CREEP - END

FRED TILLEY: We're the only province in this country that has not stopped bracket creep. I describe bracket creep the same as underwear creep: it's uncomfortable and it hurts. This will continue to hurt working families, the middle class, and seniors on a fixed income who might get a slight top-up across the province until this government stops bracket creep.

The Minister of Finance has said, "I will not speak against the idea of adjusting tax brackets to provide tax relief because I believe it is something many people would like to see." I'll table that. It's more than just what people would like to see - it's imperative for the health and welfare of Nova Scotians that we end bracket creep.

THE SPEAKER: Question?

FRED TILLEY: When will this government end bracket creep?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I'd like to thank the member for tabling my comments. I still feel the same way. Our government has been focused on fixing the health care system, and it is taking a lot of resources. I've already spoken here, earlier today in Question Period, about the extra revenues that we've received - significant sums of money that have allowed us to improve the health care system more quickly than we had hoped ourselves. We are focused on that, and we will continue to focus resources on the health care system.

FRED TILLEY: I thank the minister for that answer, but what I did hear is that there will be no relief in this budget for bracket creep and putting more money in the hands of Nova Scotians so they can decide what they do with that money. Every other province recognizes bracket creep. Prince Edward Island just came on board and are putting more money back in the hands of their residents.

Helping seniors, helping those on fixed incomes - ending bracket creep is something that would help all Nova Scotians. The Minister knows it's something people would like to see. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance commit today to ending bracket creep in Nova Scotia?

ALLAN MACMASTER: There's a theme developing here. The Official Opposition was all about the needs of Nova Scotians the last few sittings. Now suddenly they must have turned away from that, and they're focused on tax relief for Nova Scotians.

The reality is that it takes resources to address the needs of Nova Scotians. Our government has been clear from the outset. Our focus has been health care and continues to be health care. We want to make the system better for the people who are working in it and the people who they need it when they need it. We are going to continue to focus on health care.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

SNS: GOVT. SUPPORT CUTS - EXPLAIN

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Charities are now seeing the effects of this government's decision to cut supports for people who need it the most. Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank in Halifax had to temporarily suspend emergency assistance because funding for its program is running out sooner than expected. Parker Street has already used 80 percent of its fund's budget in just over a month.

The Executive Director said that home heating oil is the number one request, followed by power bills. We know that this government let power bills increase by 7 per cent last year and they cut the government home heating supports.

My question to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia is: Do they not see how their decision to cut government supports has directly caused an increase in need at our not-for-profits, which are struggling to keep up with demand?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I think it's a fair statement to make that everybody on this side of the aisle knows that many Nova Scotians are struggling, and we are all making conscious decisions of making the best decisions to support them. It doesn't matter which party is on this side of the aisle: I think the work of government will never stop and we know that there is always more to do.

[2:30 p.m.]

Pertaining to government supports, I have listed them off in my previous question and that equates to over \$160 million in supports to Nova Scotians, Speaker. These are very significant investments, and knowing that there is more to do, we will continue to make those investments. I hope the members opposite will support our historic budget on Thursday.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: This Progressive Conservative government is not taking these concerns seriously and now we are hearing stories that are a real shame. When asked about people who are out thousands of dollars and unsure how they are going to heat their homes this winter due to the Maritime Fuels bankruptcy, the Premier compared this essential need of home heating to losing a gym membership, which I will table. That right there shows how out of touch this Progressive Conservative government is and how charities like Parker Street Food & Furniture Bank are dealing with a burden, and they can't keep up with the great demand.

Speaker, my question to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia is: Will this government reverse their decision and provide more energy supports for Nova Scotians in this budget?

COLTON LEBLANC: Pertaining to the Maritime Fuels bankruptcy, that was a private matter. Through my department we were proactive, and we wanted to ensure that Nova Scotians were aware that this matter had been brought forward and we wanted them to take the appropriate steps to cancel any preauthorized payments. That's why we came out being transparent and upfront with Nova Scotians.

Again, we know that Nova Scotians are struggling and that's why we're making investments in the HARP, the Seniors Care Grant, in the Your Energy Rebate Program, and a number of others, whether it be through the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables for energy efficiency programs. I believe it was over \$140 million. That's what we're investing in housing.

I could go on, but certainly I want the member to know that those customers impacted by the Maritime Fuels bankruptcy are eligible for HARP as well.

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

DCS: HOMELESSNESS CRISIS - ADDRESS

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Just two months ago, the now Minister of Community Services accused this government of turning a blind eye to the homelessness crisis and leaving people out in the cold as he called for the indexation of income assistance rates. I'll table that.

Given recent events, my question to the minister is: Now that he is in a position to make it happen, is the minister willing to follow up his words with actions?

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: What I will say is that the issues we face are generational issues and they are bigger than any political party. What I heard from people at the doors and what I hear from people right across Nova Scotia is quite frankly, they are tired of leaders bickering.

We know there is more to do. They want people to step forward with solutions and work for Nova Scotians. That's exactly what I am here to do and that's exactly what this government is going to do.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: It's a good thing that there's a record of what those solutions should be. In fact, the new minister has been highly critical of the current government. In the past six months alone, the minister has used words like "cruel, destructive, shameful, arrogant, needing a dose of reality" - and I'll table that - to describe the lack of action - that's just in one speech - being taken to address the needs of low-income and vulnerable Nova Scotians.

In a change of tune last week, the minister told reporters that he'd reached the point where it was becoming difficult to disagree with the government's approach, and I'll table that.

My question to the minister is: What was it that the minister found difficult to disagree with? Was it the freezing of income assistance rates for two years? Was it the cuts to the Heating Assistance Rebate Program, or was it the lack of action on affordable housing? Can he explain?

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: There's a quote that I live by, by the great Muhammad Ali, who once said: "The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life." Speaker, here's what I will say. For the first time in my lifetime, there's an investment in public housing.

For the first time in my lifetime, we're seeing record investment in health care. We're seeing investments right across the board. I will say it here again and again and again: People are sick and tired of political leaders standing here throwing barbs at each other, fighting with each other, and they want us to get to work and they want solutions. This is a government of solutions, and that's what I'm here to do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

LSI: SUDDEN ILLNESS IMPACT REVIEW - COMPLETE

HON. KELLY REGAN: One would almost think that people were sick of democracy. Another way to make life more affordable and better for Nova Scotians is for this government to meet the federal standards for serious illness leave, which we've been calling on this government to implement.

We know that 90 per cent of people in Canada feel a sudden cancer diagnosis could impact their household finances. I'll table that. In this cost of living crisis, we need to ensure that when people are going through life-threatening illnesses like cancer, they aren't worried that they're going to lose their jobs. In the last session, the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration committed to reviewing the issue by the Spring session.

I will ask the Minister of Labour: Has the review been completed?

HON. JILL BALSER: We know from bringing it forward in the last session that yes, absolutely, we are looking into this. We understand the importance of being able to support Nova Scotians, especially in a time of experiencing serious illness like cancer, like others. We need to make sure that we're going to go out and consult and hear from Nova Scotians about what needs to be included in these changes.

I want the member to know that this is really important to me. I know for other members that serious illness touches us in many different ways, and we are committed to doing this work there.

KELLY REGAN: Speaker, the minister committed to doing it and reporting back to the House. Now we're hearing they're still doing it. That concerns me; 63 per cent of Canadians said that the financial burden of cancer-related expenses would have a significant impact on their stress levels and their mental health. We know how difficult life can be with a diagnosis like cancer or a stroke. Of late, with the high cost of living, taxes and inflation, it's been harder for Nova Scotians to make ends meet. When they face a diagnosis of a life-threatening illness, people should not have to worry about how they're going to afford medication, keeping the lights on, or food.

My question to the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration: When are they going to do it?

JILL BALSER: As I said, we are committed to doing this work, and that is to consult and make sure that we are meeting with organizations and individuals who are going to be impacted by these changes, making sure that we're hearing their stories. That is all part of the work that needs to be done. We have shown before that we have done that work when other issues have been brought forward. This is no different. We're going to make sure that we do the work, listen to Nova Scotians, and bring forward something that

is really meaningful, that's going to have long-lasting impacts for all Nova Scotians for years to come.

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

EECD: AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE - DELIVER

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Another way to make life more affordable for Nova Scotians has been the \$10-a-day child care deal. Recently, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland both reached \$10 a day before the goal of 2026; however, our deputy minister here in the province made it clear that we will not be reaching \$10 a day, at least not before 2026. My question to the minister is: Why can't we reach \$10 a day sooner to make life more affordable?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Thank you to the member opposite for the opportunity to explain the complexity of this transformation that we are undergoing.

We recognize the importance of getting to \$10-a-day day care, but this is generational work that we are doing. It can't be done overnight. Trust me, if this could be done overnight - if I could snap my fingers and make it happen - I absolutely would, but this is over \$600 million. This is going to take five years to do, and we are doing the work.

We have already reduced child care fees by half, which is a significant improvement for families. That is giving families thousands of dollars a year back in their pockets, dealing with the affordability issues that they have, but it is so much more than that. It's also about increasing our ECE - thank you, Speaker.

PATRICIA ARAB: Five years certainly isn't 2026, at least by my calculations. Maybe our government should be speaking to those of P.E.I. and Newfoundland and Labrador who have managed to reach it prior to this complex issue. However, we're hearing from people who are expecting or on maternity leave that they don't know if they'll be able to go back to work because they can't find child care.

From government data, there was a net gain of 2,830 new child care seats. We know that we need to reach 9,500 net new child care spots by 2026, and families need more infant and toddler spaces. It's important to note that only 970 of those new spaces are for infants and toddlers.

My question to the minister is: How many of the promised 9,500 new child care spots are going to be for infants and toddlers?

BECKY DRUHAN: Let me be clear: the 9,500-space target is a target that we inherited in a deal that was agreed to by the prior government. I want to say right now that we will build as many spaces as we need to build. That may be more than 9,500, but we

will do that. We inherited this agreement. I would say that if the members opposite would have liked to have seen something different, they had the opportunity to deal with it when they negotiated the agreement. But we'll build what's necessary. We'll go above and beyond the agreement.

I'd like to point out as well, in reference to comparisons to other provinces, the federal minister recently called Nova Scotia's program "a province to envy with its recent investments."

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

SLTC: SENIORS CARE GRANT THRESHOLD - RAISE

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: This government has promoted the Seniors Care Grant as their solution to seniors in this cost of living crisis. However, I am hearing from so many seniors in Clayton Park West who got the grant last year but couldn't get it this year because of the increase from the feds under OAS and GIS.

Can the minister explain to us why the provincial threshold was not raised this year when we all knew the feds were going to raise the OAS and the GIS?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Thank you for bringing up the Seniors Care Grant, which our government was the first to introduce and which is being emulated across the country.

There are a number of issues facing seniors in Nova Scotia, including the fact that we are now building 5,700 nursing home rooms across the province. We recently opened up 21 beds in Yarmouth, which is addressing a seniors need. What we know is that there are a lot of issues pressing on seniors. We have a budget coming out on Thursday, and I will be happy to speak more to this issue.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I thank the minister, but she did not answer my question. However, the slight increase that seniors received should not disqualify seniors from receiving the provincial Seniors Care Grant when so many seniors on fixed incomes are struggling to make ends meet. Will the minister commit to raising the threshold to cover the slight amount in the upcoming budget so that seniors are not left behind?

BARBARA ADAMS: I'm always happy to speak about budgets and how money is being spent. That's a really important topic, as to how parties choose to spend money on things. What I will say is that there have been historic investments in seniors in this province. There have been historic investments in the staff who look after our seniors, in the infrastructure of the people who are living in those facilities, as well as in other things like the Health Equipment Loan Program, as well as in home care and the CAPABLE

program - which we got from a newest member of the Legislature - which we are implementing for seniors in this province.

[2:45 p.m.]

I'll talk all day about the investments that we, this Party, are making in seniors in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DHW: HEALTH CARE SPENDING - APOLOGIZE

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, the government's approach of "going like hell" - and I'll table that - has proven to be high-risk but not high-reward. In fact, care seems to be missing entirely from the government's approach to health care spending. Carelessly handing out untendered contracts has resulted in out-of-control costs, and a decrease in the promised number of additional health care beds.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: When will the government take responsibility for its poor decision on the Hogan Court project?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: There have been historic investments to date - with a new budget coming. We have made incredible decisions. We have made incredible investments - 60,000 more primary care appointments per month. We've invested in 60 new and strengthened primary care clinics across this province. We are finally using pharmacists to the fullness of their scope, resulting in 95,000. We are working with seniors in long-term care with the Nova Scotia Health Authority to transition seniors in this province in a respectful way to appropriate places for them to recondition and finally get home.

We have a new Cape Breton Medical Campus. We have a surgical wait-list that has reduced by 27 per cent since April 1, 2022. I have about six more pages . . .

SUSAN LEBLANC: Money is tight these days. Nova Scotians go to the grocery store and compare costs before deciding what items to buy because they understand the importance of getting value for what they are spending.

On the other hand, this government - as we have heard from the Auditor General - bought a \$35 million hotel without even a proper appraisal. While many Nova Scotians are scrounging to save a few cents, the government is recklessly throwing around millions of dollars.

Will the government apologize to Nova Scotians for taking such a careless approach to health care spending?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: What I really want Nova Scotians to know is that this is a government that fully invests in their health, in their wellness, and in their ability to transition, based on the stage of their life, to an appropriate place where they can live.

We did not buy a hotel; we bought a transition-to-community facility. When you have people who are world-class clinicians - like Dr. Christine Short and Dr. Rockwood - excited about the prospect of the ability to care for our elders in this type of environment, it is more than value for money. Nova Scotians should be very proud that this government has their shoulders to the wheel, and that we show every day how we value them, because nobody on that side did for the last 12 years.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

DHW: CONTINUOUS GLUCOSE MONITORS - FUND

HON. KELLY REGAN: Speaker, I just want to congratulate the Minister of Health and Wellness on the 153,000-plus Nova Scotians who are without a doctor today because of their historic investments in health care.

Investing in preventive health and life-saving technology will help more Nova Scotians in this cost of living crisis. That's why we've been calling on this government to cover continuous glucose monitors to make life more affordable for those living with diabetes.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness is: Will they commit to fully funding continuous glucose monitors in this budget?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We have heard from a number of folks from across Nova Scotia about the importance of diabetes care. In my role as a registered nurse, I have worked with a number of families over the years.

As this House knows, there are a number of demands on our public system, and we continue to look at ways in which we can support Nova Scotians. I certainly want to signal to families that we know this is an important issue and we will do our very best to support them in the future.

KELLY REGAN: We've heard loud and clear from people with lived experience with diabetes how expensive it is to have the right technology that provides better health outcomes and a better quality of life – namely, continuous glucose monitors.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The time allotted for Question Period has now ended.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. KENT SMITH: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, you may.

KENT SMITH: In the East Gallery amongst a sea of special advisers, you'll see the bearded wonder himself, Ryan Kelly. (Cheers and applause) Mr. Kelly is celebrating his last day with government, as he's moving on to become the CEO of Sail Canada. I'll say: Long may your big jib draw. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Congratulations, Ryan. Best wishes.

The honourable member for Sydney Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Speaker, I'm rising on a point of order based on some of the comments from the Premier during Question Period, using the reference that stealing was actually happening. We referenced to you at the time that we felt it was unparliamentary. We're just looking for a ruling.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: I appreciate the member rising on this point. Of course, just a little context. I was, of course, referring to the Auditor General's report where the Auditor General said that the Liberal Party "did not report full knowledge of missing funds," "chose not to complete a forensic audit," "chose not to file a complaint with the RCMP," and "signed a settlement agreement with confidentiality provisions with the former employee," "appeared to potentially conceal and delay reporting of a multi-year misuse of funds until after the 2021 election." That's the context with which I use that word. Speaker, I will withdraw that word and replace it with: the Liberals' intention to misappropriate taxpayer money.

THE SPEAKER: I would call upon the Chief Clerk for a moment, please.

Thank you for your patience. Since the Premier has withdrawn his comments, we will move on from here.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, that concludes government business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Wednesday, February 28th between the hours 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. It's also Opposition Day tomorrow, so I'll call on my honourable colleague, the House Leader for the Official Opposition, to call business for the day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Thank you, Speaker. Interesting first day. Welcome back. Opposition business for tomorrow will be Bill No. 405, the HST Reduction Act; Bill No. 409, the Income Tax Act; and Bill No. 412, the Residential Tenancies Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise again and meet tomorrow, March 28th from the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

AN HON. MEMBER: February.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. February 28th from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried. We now stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 2:54 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 917**

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas a new song, "Shipyard Tough," reflects on Atlantic Canada's shipbuilding, written and released by Pictou West native, Ashley George; and

Whereas Ashley began writing music as a young boy and used his own life experience having worked at Trenton Works, the Pictou Shipyard, and the Halifax Shipyard with Irving Shipbuilding to inspire the creation of the song; and

Whereas the music video showcased working-class shipyard employees that performed back-breaking labour, such as steelworking and welding, and their Maritime roots;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly celebrate and recognize Ashley George's "Shipyard Tough" as the new working-class anthem that reflects on Atlantic Canada's shipbuilding and is a testament to the history and resilience of Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 918

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Emilie Pece and Jessica Arseneault operate Dandelion Acres Homestead and Rescue in rural Pictou County; and

Whereas Emilie and Jessica adopted and rescued pet pigs as people sought to rehome their piglets when they became too big to live in houses and apartments; what started as one pet pig, to 60; and

Whereas their rescue farm includes 16 ducks, five rescued goats, chickens, and a few dogs. They rehome all of the animals with a signed contract of care, with those that cannot be rehomed to live out their natural lives at their pet rescue;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Emilie Pece and Jessica Arsenault for their big hearts and loving home at the Dandelion Acres Homestead and Rescue.

RESOLUTION NO. 919

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Dave Gunning has joined forces with the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia and launched a campaign supporting rural Nova Scotia schools; and

Whereas the Dave Gunning Zero Hunger Campaign has reached over half of its \$100,000 goal to raise crucial funds to bolster and expand the School Free Stores across rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas contributions to this campaign address hunger challenges and empower young minds to focus on their education, graduate from high school, and pursue promising futures;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dave Gunning and the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia for addressing and helping to eradicate food insecurity in rural Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 920

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas constituent Eric LeBlanc celebrated his 80th birthday on February 13, 2024; and

Whereas Eric is a dedicated volunteer and community supporter in the Town of Pictou and Municipality of Pictou County; and

Whereas Eric works with the Stella Maris Catholic Church, the Pictou West Food Bank, the Pictou County Fuel Fund, and many, many others;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulates Eric on his 80th birthday.

RESOLUTION NO. 921

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Jim Gunn is a retired Pictou West educator and consultant dedicated to the expansion of the former Sackville Area Warming Centre; and

Whereas Jim is a volunteer board member of the Beacon House Interfaith Society, that took over the management of the warming centre in 2020 to become the Beacon House Shelter; and

Whereas with support from the United Way and provincial funding, the Beacon House Shelter is now open 24/7 and provides mental health support from the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jim Gunn and his volunteer commitment with the Board of Beacon House Shelter and his lifelong support to his community.

RESOLUTION NO. 922

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the New Glasgow Ukulele Group is to be recognized for their many volunteer hours of entertaining seniors in the Pictou West community; and

Whereas the members of the New Glasgow Ukulele Group are made up of seniors and travel to other senior residences throughout the week singing and playing music for people; and

Whereas Helen Jordan, Cline Marshall, Bev Cameron, Sheila Dempster, Donna Belanger, Glenn Horton, Joan MacDonald, Sylvia Morrison, Pat Campbell, Edna Wilson, Brent Cameron, Verna Champion, Carol Horton, and Janet Skelton make up the members of the New Glasgow Ukulele Group;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the New Glasgow Ukulele Group for their talent and dedication to music and their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 923

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Cody Stewart Joudrie opened the River John Motor Company at 2775 River John Station Rod in River John; and

Whereas this new small business offers repair service to a wide range of equipment, including compact diesel tractor maintenance, small engines, lawnmowers, chainsaws, snowmobiles, marine, trailers, and other recreational vehicles; and

Whereas the River John Motor Company will also rent batteries and other mechanical-related gear and parts, with the plan to eventually provide a rental service for marine, trailers and other equipment;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cody Stewart Joudrie on the launching and operations of a new small business in rural Nova Scotia, the River John Motor Company.

RESOLUTION NO. 924

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas the Ship Hector Curling Bonspiel celebrated its 50th anniversary in February 2024; and

Whereas the tournament was held at the four Pictou County curling clubs: the Bluenose in New Glasgow; the Stellar in Stellarton; the Westville club in Westville; and the New Caledonian in Pictou; and

Whereas there was a full bracket of 56 teams that played matches from Friday evening until Sunday midday at all four of the clubs;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Ship Hector Curling Bonspiel on celebrating its 50th year of Curling in Pictou County.

RESOLUTION NO. 925

By: Hon. Karla MacFarlane (Pictou West)

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

Whereas Molly Caldwell is attending the Special Olympics Winter Games in Calgary from February 27th to March 7th; and

Whereas Molly has been skating for 10 years and skates twice a week, as well as working with other figure skaters; and

Whereas Molly is one of the youngest athletes to attend the Special Olympics Winter Games and the first figure skater to attend from Special Olympics Pictou County;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Molly and wish her the best of luck at the 2024 Winter Games in Calgary.