



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Danielle Barkhouse

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First Session

TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

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HALIFAX, TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

Sixty-fifth General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Danielle Barkhouse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

John White, Marco MacLeod, Tom Taggart

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

TIM OUTHIT: Thank you, Speaker, and I come bearing gifts.

As Vice Chair of the Committee on Public Bills, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 1 - An Act Respecting Government Organization and Administration.

Bill No. 6 - An Act Respecting Agriculture, Energy and Natural Resources.

Bill No. 11 - Administrative Efficiency and Accountability in Healthcare Act.

Bill No. 12 - An Act Respecting Advanced Education and Research.

Bill No. 21 - Justice Administration Amendment (2025) Act.

Bill No. 68 - Financial Measures (2025) Act.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

RESOLUTION NO. 104

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

Whereas Nova Scotians are taking action to protect coastal properties in communities from the impacts of climate change, such as rising sea level and erosion; and

Whereas in planning the new Nova Scotia Community College Sydney Waterfront Campus a large coastal construction project, the design team used projected sea level rise data to make the building resilient to possible future impacts; and

Whereas this project is led by Daniel Kelly, director of Facilities & Engineering, and Michael Chapman, manager of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Space Planning, the new campus was raised to withstand sea level projection for the year 2100 and has special windows to withstand storm-force winds, demonstrating how data, tools, and planning are helping people make informed choices about building near the coast that are safe and sustainable;

Therefore be it resolved that Nova Scotians join me in recognizing Daniel Kelly and his design, engineering and

construction team, who are using science and data to make our buildings and communities resilient to climate change.

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 Government House Leader for the Official Opposition.

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I'm wondering if we can revert back to Tabling of Documents and Reports.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request to revert back to Tabling of Reports, Regulations and Other Papers. Is it agreed? It is agreed.

[TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS]

The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SUZY HANSEN: As per the request of the House, I would like to table a document based on my statement on Friday that I was supposed to table.

THE SPEAKER: The document is tabled.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 82 - An Act to Amend Chapter 385 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Real Property Act, to Eliminate Competitor Property Controls that Restrict Access to Food or Medicine. (Krista Gallagher)

Bill No. 83 - An Act to Protect Nova Scotia Workers from Tariffs through Employment Insurance Top-ups. (Paul Wozney)

Bill No. 84 - An Act to Amend Chapter 197 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Health Services and Insurance Act, Respecting Free Birth Control. (Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 85 - An Act to Create a Comprehensive Economic Strategy. (Hon. Iain Rankin)

Bill No. 86 - An Act to Establish the Nova Scotia Healthcare Trust. (Lisa Lachance)

Bill No. 87 - An Act to Give Nova Scotians the Right to Primary Care. (Rod Wilson)

Bill No. 88 - An Act to Amend Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2011, the Public Procurement Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

[1:15 p.m.]

Bill No. 89 – An Act to Recognize the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. (Lisa Lachance)

Bill No. 90 - An Act to Amend Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2010, the Finance Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

Bill No. 91 - An Act to Establish Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Awareness and Celebration Day. (Lisa Lachance)

Bill No. 92 - An Act to Provide Relief from Expenses Due to Road Construction. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 105

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

Whereas economic development proposals need to reflect a reasonable business case analysis, whereby various factors and indicators are examined to understand Nova Scotia's strengths, opportunities, and weaknesses in targeted industries, and to develop strategies for sustainable growth and development in terms of attracting investment, employment creation and recruitment, and infrastructure needs; and

Whereas all Nova Scotians are treaty people, whereby the Nova Scotia government has a legal and constitutional duty to consult with the Mi'kmaq, and this cannot be ignored; and

Whereas there are no special interests in Nova Scotia, and gaining social licence for natural resource development is an industry-accepted process and needs to be developed by consultation amongst all stakeholders;

I don't have the second page. Can I have a moment to grab the second page of the motion? Or I can table it later.

THE SPEAKER: You can table the second page later.

LISA LACHANCE: The motion reads:

Therefore be it resolved that the House refer the issue of economic development analysis in the development of our natural resource sector to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development to undertake a study of what is necessary for us to understand.

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 is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

SQUARE ROOTS PGM.: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: I rise today to bring recognition to a great group of youth who have made the Square Roots program possible in Dartmouth East. Once a month, youth in Dartmouth assist with preparing bags of fresh produce and delivering them to families in need around Dartmouth. These youth, often from local sports teams and youth clubs, are facilitated by Halifax Regional Municipality Deputy Mayor Tony Mancini and me to ensure families are supported by the Square Roots program.

At this time of national inflation and food insecurity, Square Roots is playing an important role in assisting with these challenges. That's why they continue to grow across our province. Square Roots is currently in 16 locations and are providing food to residents in 25 communities. Their goal is to be working in every county in Nova Scotia before the Summer. Square Roots, which began nine years ago with Saint Mary's University students with the Enactus program, has recently surpassed one million pounds of food distributed. What they have accomplished is truly incredible.

I ask that all members of the House join me in thanking the organizers and volunteers in Square Roots and congratulating them on their remarkable achievements and laudable goals.

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

LISA LACHANCE: I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

LISA LACHANCE: Joining us today we have members of the Saint Mary's University Enactus team, who last joined us on their way to Kazakhstan in the Fall. They're on their way to the nationals in Spring, and I have a member's statement relevant to their work. Today, I would like to welcome Courtney Dingle, Gabe Martin, Sarah Wheeler, Nathaniel Collier, Evan Payne, Tyler MacLean, Hanna Johnston, Jason Turner, Leslie Arsenault, Robert Francis and Rohit Rohit. I welcome them all to the House. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

SQUARE ROOTS PGM.: MILESTONE - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: I rise today to mark a provincial milestone initiated and led by Saint Mary's University students. This month, Square Roots celebrates the major milestone of delivering one million pounds of food since its beginning in 2016. Square Roots was developed by students at SMU who participate in the Enactus Saint Mary's program, bringing together entrepreneurially minded students with social action.

Square Roots buys imperfect but perfectly edible food from local farmers and sells it directly to customers at a price that is 50 per cent less than at the grocery store. So Nova Scotians benefit from getting healthy food at a more affordable price, and farmers benefit because they get revenue from food that may have otherwise gone to waste.

Square Roots addresses the twin issues of food waste and food insecurity. Working with local contacts, Square Roots is currently bringing food to 16 counties across Nova Scotia, and it intends to be in all 18 this year. Their goal is to expand the program nationally. I ask all members to recognize the team's ongoing impact in Nova Scotia. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

CARNEY, MARK: NEW PRIME MINISTER - CONGRATS.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I rise in my place to take a moment to congratulate Mark Carney on becoming Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and our next Prime Minister.

This is an exciting time for Canadians across the country. There's a renewed sense of pride and optimism about the future, and I know that Prime Minister Carney's leadership will bring a steady hand at a time when our country needs it the most. With a strong economic background, I know that he'll help us navigate the challenges ahead, like strengthening the economy, making life more affordable, and ensuring that no Canadian is left behind.

These are issues that matter to Nova Scotians. I look forward to engaging with him and his team to ensure our Province is heard and supported. I know many Liberals in Nova Scotia worked hard to make this moment happen. Congratulations again to Prime Minister Carney and his team. I look forward to working together to build a better future for all Canadians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY: CELEB. OF IRISH CULTURE - RECOG.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I think someone's trying to get to the Senate. (Laughter) Yesterday, Nova Scotians of Irish descent and those who are Irish at heart celebrated St. Patrick's Day, a day that speaks to the deep historical connection between Nova Scotia and Ireland.

For centuries, Irish immigrants have shaped our province, from the early settlers who arrived here in the 18th and 19th centuries, fleeing hardship and seeking opportunity, to the generations of Irish Canadians who continue to enrich our communities today. My own family traces its roots back to Enniskillen, Ireland.

A reminder of the enduring ties that link our province to the Emerald Island, St. Paddy's Day is more than a cultural celebration. It is a testament of the resilience, unity, and strength of the Irish spirit and people. It is a day to share meals, enjoy music, and raise

a glass in good cheer. Happy St. Paddy's Day to everyone. Much love to our Irish family across this beautiful world.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'd like to draw the members' attention to the gallery opposite, where we are joined by three folks who are no stranger to this Chamber, and one who is new. I'd like to introduce Joe Triff, who is vice president of the Halifax Professional Fire Fighters Association, his daughter, Zoe, who is with him today, and Mike Sears and Brendan Meagher, his colleagues. I ask all members to join me in offering them a warm welcome. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

TRIFF, JOE: HFX. FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOC. - CONGRATS.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise today to recognize Joe Triff, the vice president of the Halifax Professional Fire Fighters Association. Since stepping into this role, Joe has been a strong leader in advocating for a safer firefighting culture, one that is better equipped to deal with the extreme conditions Nova Scotians have become all too familiar with in recent years.

Joe was recently recognized for his leadership at the International Association of Firefighters Affiliate Leadership Training Summit, where he was honoured with the General's Award for Leadership. Joe is one of only four affiliate leaders across North America to receive this recognition - a testament to his dedication, leadership, and tireless commitment to Halifax professional firefighters and the communities that they serve.

Please join me in congratulating Joe on this achievement and thanking him for his tireless service.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

MARCHAND, BRAD: HOCKEY ACHIEVEMENTS - RECOG.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: As a longtime Bruins fan, I want to recognize one of the all-time greats, who has recently been traded to the Florida Panthers after 16 seasons in Boston. Brad Marchand is the kind of guy you love to have on your team and the kind of guy that

you hate on the other team. He even earned the nickname from former President of the United States Barack Obama as the “Little Ball of Hate” before. Regardless of getting into a bit of trouble on the ice, he always played with unparalleled passion and grit.

Marchand helped the team win a Stanley Cup in 2011 and earned five gold medals for Team Canada, including most recently at the 4 Nations Face-Off this year in Boston. Marchand will go down as a legendary Bruin, joining the likes of Bobby Orr, Johnny Bucyk, Phil Esposito, Cam Neely, Ray Bourque, and so on, with team records like the most short-handed goals, most overtime goals, and most playoff goals.

I will continue to keep his jersey on the wall that his family gifted to me in 2021 and Nova Scotia will continue to cheer him on as No. 63.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

HON. JILL BALSER: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction before my member’s statement.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

JILL BALSER: My little sister Anne Balser is in the gallery today. Everyone should know that it is also her birthday. I am really glad that Mom dragged you out to see me, Anne. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here. Happy Birthday and hi, Mama Balser.

The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

SISTER, ANNE - BIRTHDAY WISHES

HON. JILL BALSER: I rise today with so much love and admiration to recognize my little sister, Anne Balser, on her birthday and to brag about all of her golf accomplishments. My family and I knew that Anne was destined for greatness at a young age. For me, it was when she started beating me on the golf course. Anne’s natural talent combined with her incredibly competitive nature - it was only a matter of time that all of Anne’s trophies would take up all the space in our house.

In addition to the countless tournaments she’s won, provincial titles she’s earned, and the multiple All-Canadian and All-American teams she was named to, in 2008 Anne led the Lady Vikes to their first national championship and was named the University of Victoria Female Athlete of the Year in 2011. Most recently Anne was named the 2024 recipient of the Stan Leonard Class “A” Assistant Professional of the Year.

Anne's impact on the game has been felt across the province as a player, a competitor, and now as a coach and a professional. I extend my deepest congratulations to my sister on all of her achievements and for making us so proud. In my completely biased opinion, Anne is the best female golfer that Nova Scotia has ever seen. I love you, Anne. Happy birthday. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

ROD WILSON: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

ROD WILSON: I ask the Legislature to join me - one of the most courageous women I know is Wyndolyn Brown and her family, who are here in the Legislature today. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

BROWN, WYNDOLYN: EMPOWERMENT FOR HOPE - THANKS

ROD WILSON: Ms. Brown is a native of East Preston but now is proud to call "The Pubs" in Halifax her home. Wyndolyn has an incredible story which was shared last week on CBC on March 13th. During her lifetime, Wyndolyn has overcome poverty, mental illness, and periods of living on the streets. She has also been involved in sexual assault and spent time being involved in human trafficking.

Ms. Brown is not only a survivor, but she is also a true courageous leader. She is the founder and CEO for Empowerment for Hope, an organization that supports people in sex trafficking and gender-based violence. She is an advocate, a speaker, and community leader.

Wyndolyn, you are one of the most courageous people I have ever met. I know your story and your actions inspire others, give them hope, but also make them feel not so alone in a sometimes tragic world. Thank you so much for your actions. (Standing ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

CZAPALAY, AVA: PUBLIC SERVICE - RECOG. (PART 1)

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, I stand today to recognize the retirement of a deputy minister who worked tirelessly on behalf of Nova Scotians for many

years, Ava Czapalay. She was most recently the deputy minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

[1:30 p.m.]

Ava and I have a shared personal history. Both our grandfathers worked in the Springhill coal mine at the same time. The ability to work hard and persevere is in our DNA.

This government has referred to problem-stretchers and problem-solvers. Those who know and who worked with Ava appreciated her work ethic, her keen interest, and her astute problem-solving abilities. Many MLAs have commented on Ava's full grasp of her files, evident during her many HR and Public Accounts Committee hearings.

While in government, Ava created EduNova Co-operative, set up creative spaces called "sandboxes" within universities, led in the establishment of Research Nova Scotia, and recently coordinated the development and implementation of a plan to modernize apprenticeship, strengthen the workers' compensation system, and implement a strong economic immigration program.

I'll continue this in my next time up.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

INCE, HON. TONY: NEW SENATOR - RECOG.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Speaker, I also want to rise on my feet and recognize someone who many of us know in here and who served as an MLA from 2013 to 2024: the Honourable Tony Ince, who was just named a senator.

Tony is a good friend of mine and of many in here. He has given some of the most passionate speeches you ever would have seen in this place. I do want to stand on my feet to recognize Tony. Not only was he an MLA, but he was also the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs for this province. He was the first minister of the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism, and he was the Minister of Communications Nova Scotia. He brought forward the Emancipation Day Act for Nova Scotia, and he brought forward the Land Titles Acceleration Act to speed up land titles.

I rise in my place to recognize a good man, a gentleman, and a friend to many, and congratulate him on his appointment to the Canadian Senate: Tony Ince.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

FREEMAN, DR. ALISON: HEALTH CARE CAREER - THANKS

HON. BRIAN WONG: Speaker, March 11th was Canadian Women Physicians Day. I would like to highlight a family physician who was born in Oakfield. Dr. Alison Freeman has dedicated her career to advancing rural and remote health care. Her education at the University of Wollongong in Australia and the University of British Columbia in Victoria focused on rural and indigenous health.

Dr. Freeman's extensive experience includes practicing in Yukon, where she served as President of the Yukon Medical Association, and provided care in remote communities. Now settled in Liverpool, she continues her commitment to rural health care, emphasizing community involvement and personalized patient relationships.

A passionate advocate for physician recruitment and diversity in medicine, Dr. Freeman works to attract talent to Nova Scotia. As the physician recruitment and retention lead in the Western Zone, she is pivotal in welcoming new physicians, balancing her roles as a mother and a physician.

Please join me in celebrating Dr. Freeman and welcoming her back to Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

PAUL WOZNEY: I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

PAUL WOZNEY: It's my pleasure to recognize two champions from my riding in Sackville-Cobequid. With us today from the Cobequid Health Centre Foundation are President and CEO Stacey Chapman, and Marketing and Communications Coordinator Cassandra Collett.

I ask them to stand and be recognized by the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

COBEQUID HEALTH CARE FDN.: FUNDRAISING - RECOG.

PAUL WOZNEY: Speaker, I rise to recognize champions of health care progress in Sackville. Founded by nurses who recognize the pressing need for improved health care in our area, the Cobequid Health Centre Foundation maintains a legacy of generosity and selflessness by bringing new technologies and services to the Cobequid Health Centre that simply would not exist otherwise.

The foundation recently concluded fundraising for new GI Genius units for its endoscopy clinic. This technology promises to transform colorectal cancer screening at the Cobequid Health Centre and contribute to better outcomes for those suffering from the disease, which has one of the highest mortality rates of all cancers.

Not content to rest on this success, the Cobequid Health Centre Foundation will spend all of May - Cobequid Month - fundraising for a trans-vaginal ultrasound probe, which will improve patient comfort during exams and improve diagnostic accuracy for issues like urinary tract infections or congenital uterine anomalies.

I ask all in attendance to join me in thanking Stacey and Cassandra for not only maintaining our community's health but for improving it for years to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

BLOIS, KODY: NEW FED. AGRIC. MINISTER - RECOG.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Speaker, I want to recognize Kody Blois for his appointment that he earned as Canada's Agriculture Minister. Kody was elected in 2019 and served as Chair of the Atlantic Liberal caucus and is Chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. He has been a strong advocate for the agriculture sector here in Nova Scotia and across Canada, which led to recognition by the Canadian Produce Marketing Association as its 2023 Produce Champion. As minister, he will be a welcome voice for the Canadian agriculture sector that is a crucial contributor to both the Nova Scotia and the entire Canadian economy.

I ask all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Kody, and wish him well with his new, very important portfolio.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MACARTHUR, BRUCE: COR. MEDAL RECIP. - CONGRATS.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Bruce MacArthur on being awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal, a well-deserved honour that reflects his outstanding commitment to community service.

As a dedicated board member of the Kings Volunteer Resource Centre, Bruce has worked tirelessly to support volunteerism, ensuring that individuals and organizations have the resources and encouragement they need to serve our communities. His leadership and vision have helped strengthen volunteer networks, foster community engagement, and inspire others to take an active role in making a difference. Bruce's dedication and contributions have left a lasting impact, and this honour is a testament to his unwavering service to Nova Scotia and beyond.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Bruce MacArthur on receiving this distinguished medal and thanking him for his invaluable contributions to our province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

GUILT FREE GOODIES: HEALTHY COOKIES - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: One of my must-visit stands at the Alderney Farmers Market is Guilt Free Goodies, run by 14-year-old Dartmouth North resident Louis Goossens. Louis's cookies are gluten-free, dairy-free, and made without refined sugars. They are truly delicious - a perfect mix of sesame and sweetness. Guilt Free Goodies does their best to use local ingredients, including Foote Family Farm honey.

A Grade 9 student at Bicentennial Junior High, Louis was originally inspired by his father's healthy cookies, which he knew would sell really well at markets. He was too young to get a job, so he made one for himself. Sales were good and Louis was making a profit, so he kept going to markets, and will for as long as he can. I'm thrilled to report that Louis has used his profits to save for university.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating this young entrepreneur on his success and wish all the best for Louis Goossens in what I am sure will be a promising future. Also, do yourselves a favour and try the cookies as soon as possible.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: May I make an introduction before I finish my member statement?

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Today I'd like them to rise and introduce Jennifer Graves, who's here today, along with Liz LeClair. Please stand. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. We hope you enjoy your time here.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

CZAPALAY, AVA: PUBLIC SERVICE - RECOG. (PART 2)

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I just wanted to recognize them. They're both fearless women who stand in their truth. I thank them for all their work in their NDAs. Thank you for being here.

I'd like to finish my member statement on the retirement of Deputy Minister Ava Czapalay. Ava was not a deputy minister who sat behind her desk. She travelled to every corner of this province to listen and inform her minister of issues facing the work of Nova Scotians.

The CEO of Emmerson Packaging, a large employer in Amherst, commented to me on Ava's accessibility and problem-solving abilities. I experienced her support, as I know many MLAs did, on matters within my constituency. The Chair of the Workers' Compensation Board recently wrote to Ava: "Our collaborative initiatives and the significant progress in reducing workplace injuries are a testament to your vision, integrity, and ability to foster meaningful co-operation." As Chair of the International Women's Forum Atlantic Chapter, Ava initiated an annual reception that honoured elected women, regardless of political affiliation.

Please join me in wishing former Deputy Minister Ava Czapalay a happy and well-deserved retirement after 38 years of service to Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

PATTERSON, ANGELA: COR. MEDAL RECIP. - CONGRATS.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Angela Patterson on receiving the King Charles III Coronation Medal in recognition of her outstanding service to our community.

As a dedicated board member of the Kings Volunteer Resource Centre, Angela has been a tireless advocate for volunteerism, ensuring that organizations and individuals have the support they need to give back to our communities. Her leadership and passion for service have strengthened the culture of volunteerism in Nova Scotia and inspired many others to contribute their time and skills for the betterment of others.

Angela's selfless dedication and unwavering commitment to making a difference make her truly deserving of this prestigious honour.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Angela Patterson on this well-earned recognition and thank her for her ongoing contributions to our province.

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

ALL-STARS CHEERLEADING TEAM: SUCCESS - CONGRATS. (PART 1)

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, I rise to recognize Premier Cheerleading All-Stars and the teams located in Gardiner Mines, and the fantastic season all teams have had:

- Glow Superior at meltdown: Luxx Cheer Blast, 1st place; Luxx CNCC, 1st place; Luxx Meltdown, 1st place;
- Lady G: Cheer Blast, 1st place and blast-off champions (overall judges' choice); CNCC, 1st place and judges' choice;
- Undone: CNCC, 1st place; Meltdown, 1st place and judges' choice;
- MiniMac: Cheer Blast, 1st place; Cheer Challenge, 2nd place; Meltdown, 1st place;
- Blinc: CNCC, 2nd place; Meltdown, 1st place;
- Rare: CNCC, 1st place and tumbling specialty award; Meltdown, 1st place and judges' choice for R1.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle.

WE CARE RADIOTHON: FUNDRAISING SUCCESS - THANKS

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Speaker, the majority of children born in the tri-counties are born in the Yarmouth Regional Hospital. The Women and Children's Health Unit requires the best equipment possible to help both mothers and babies during this exciting time.

This year, the Yarmouth Hospital Foundation's WE CARE Radiothon raised an amazing \$136,409 for the purchase of vital new equipment for the unit. The equipment to be purchased includes birthing beds that offer comfort and safety for the mother; infant incubators that offer a protective and temperature-controlled environment for newborns, ensuring they have the best possible start in life; and pediatric/infant scales that are specifically designed for a demanding health care environment.

I ask all members of the House to join me in thanking the donors, sponsors, and everyone who participated in making this year's WE CARE Radiothon another huge success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ABORIG. PEOPLE: DUTY TO CONSULT - RECOG. (PART 1)

SUZY HANSEN: Speaker, in 2004 and 2005, the Supreme Court of Canada released three landmark decisions that establish the common law Duty to Consult Indigenous Peoples. The Supreme Court of Canada held that provincial and federal governments have a duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples and accommodate their

interests where appropriate when contemplating conduct that may adversely impact established and asserted Aboriginal treaty rights.

The Government of Nova Scotia recognized the duty to consult with Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, and beginning in 2007, established an institutional framework for consultation. This includes an interim consultation policy, the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada terms of reference, a consultation co-operation agreement with the federal government, a guide for proponents, a consultation division at the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, a number of training and capacity-building initiatives, and supporting and guiding tools to ensure that duty is met.

The Government of Nova Scotia policy and guidelines consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia achieves another important step in developing a consistent process that respects the established and asserted rights of the Mi'kmaq people of Nova Scotia.

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

GIBSON, KAREN: CAMPAIGN WORK - RECOG.

BRAD MCGOWAN: Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a long-time resident of Cole Harbour-Dartmouth. Karen Gibson has lived in the community for more than 50 years and is a retired professional dietitian with an exceptional 35-year career at the Nova Scotia Rehab Centre.

Also, Karen is very involved in volunteering, including supporting Hospice Halifax, and serving as chair of the Cole Harbour Heritage Festival for 10 years. She is also a mom and soon to be a grandmom.

Karen was also a valued volunteer in my campaign and was always a wonderful door-knocking partner, even in some pretty wet and miserable weather. Door knocking with Karen was always great because she knew everyone in the community. Residents who didn't know me were willing to take her word that I would likely be a good MLA because I'm a good neighbour. Thank you for your belief in me, Karen.

Speaker, I ask the members of this Legislature to join me in recognizing an exceptional member of our community, a great volunteer, and an amazing neighbour, Karen Gibson.

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

[1:45 p.m.]

JOUDRY, SHALAN: ARTISTIC CONTRIBS. - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: I rise to recognize shalan joudry. For more than two decades, shalan joudry, an L'nu and European-descent storyteller, has worked as a playwright, podcast producer, oral storyteller, actor, and cultural interpreter. The past number of months have been particularly busy. Her first short film as a director and producer premiered at the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival. *Welima'q* means "it smells good", and it is the base for one of the Mi'kmaq words for sweetgrass, inspired by the sweetgrass gatherings she does each summer with her family.

In November, she led the development of *Winter Moons*, a dance theatre performance that followed the story of L'nu women surviving three moons of winter together deep in the forest. She worked with dance choreographer Sarah Prosper and the Women of First Light grandmothers and cultural carriers.

A member and resident of the Bear River First Nation, shalan holds a Masters in Environmental Studies from Dalhousie University and is now an interdisciplinary Ph.D. candidate and an instructor of a land-based learning course. Speaker, I ask all members to recognize shalan's contributions to Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

MACDONALD MEMORIAL BONSPIEL: 50TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. GREG MORROW: I rise to congratulate the organizers of the annual MacDonald Memorial Bonspiel at the Canso Curling Club on their 50th anniversary. This event, held this year on March 29th, is in memory of Joe MacDonald, a cherished father, friend, and lifelong member of the community.

Joe's love for curling and his dedication to the club are remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him. His spirit of camaraderie, sportsmanship, and unwavering support for the Canso Curling Club are qualities we strive to carry forward. It's fitting that this bonspiel - a celebration of the sport he loved - continues to bring together the Canso and area curling community in both friendly competition and shared memories. Special mention to Joe's family and extended family in keeping this tradition going, ensuring that his passion for curling lives on through events like this.

Speaker, I want to extend my congratulations on 50 years of the MacDonald Memorial Bonspiel. To all the participants, volunteers, and organizers who make this event a success year after year, I wish you a successful event coming up on the 29th.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DARKSIDE DIPPERS: FUNDRAISER - THANKS

SUSAN LEBLANC: The brave souls of the Darkside Dippers meet every Sunday morning throughout the Winter and early Spring on the shores of Lake Banook to plunge into the lake's chilly waters. These polar dippers have recently brought their love for cold and community together to raise funds for the North Grove food and community hub in Dartmouth North.

The Cold Dips for Hot Meals fundraiser asks a pertinent question: What's more nerve-wracking - jumping into freezing water or your grocery bill? Individuals and teams are sponsored by friends and family to do 5, 12, or 25 polar dips in the name of raising \$15,000 - or 3,000 free meals - to families facing food insecurity. Every \$50 raised is another 10 cooked meals served. The fundraiser wraps up this week.

I ask that the House join me in thanking the Darkside Dippers for getting cold for a cause and supporting the vital work of the North Grove.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

DART. PIGDOGS: RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB - RECOG.

HON. TWILA GROSSE: I rise to recognize the Dartmouth PigDogs Rugby Football Club, a non-profit sport organization that serves people across several rural and urban Nova Scotia communities. Since 2001, the Dartmouth PigDogs RFC has provided those who participate in the sport of rugby opportunities to build transferrable skills, establish health and wellness, and create a lasting community. They provide rugby programming and competitive play from ages four to 50 plus.

They provide low-barrier opportunities for youth to engage in the sport while ensuring diversity and inclusion in the sport through several outreach initiatives. They facilitate free rugby try-it days for youth in the community, and in just five years, their programs have been accessed by more than 700 youth.

I ask all members to please join me to recognize the Dartmouth PigDogs Rugby Football Club for the work they do in the community of Dartmouth and surrounding areas.

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

ALL-STARS CHEERLEADING TEAM: SUCCESS - CONGRATS. (PART 2)

KENDRA COOMBES: Part 2 of the Premier Cheerleading All-Stars and their successes:

- Sleek: Cheer Blast, first place; CNCC, first place; Meltdown, first place;

- Smashbox: Cheer Blast, first place; CNCC first and stunt specialty award; Maritime Meltdown, first and Level 1 judges' choice;
- TooFaced: Cheer Blast, first place; CNCC, first place, Meltdown, first place;
- Atomic: Meltdown - you name it - first place; the Tiny Tarte, the Balm Babez, and the Covergirls, all excellent performance awards.

Cheerleading is certainly on the move in Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier, thanks to their home base in Gardiner Mines. Good luck, girls, in your future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

AFTER SCHOOL CELTIC CREW: CELTIC PGM. - RECOG.

MARCO MACLEOD: Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the After School Celtic Crew.

This new after-school program is owned and operated by two Pictou County moms with experience in Celtic studies and programming, including highland dance. Holly MacDonald-Bent and Kelsey Wallace are also co-founders of the Pictou Celtic Arts Society.

The Celtic Crew is a space for children aged four to 12 to experience Celtic heritage and culture while having fun through games, songs, lessons, art, and dance. Young members get to experience Gaelic language, Celtic history, and folklore.

Please join me in congratulating Holly and Kelsey for opening this dynamic youth club in Pictou West.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ABORIG. PEOPLE: DUTY TO CONSULT - RECOG. (PART 2)

SUZY HANSEN: Speaker, I rise today to recognize my brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, cousins, and family of warriors in the community of Sipekne'katik. During my community conversations, Chief Michelle Glasgow spoke with me about the lack of communication by this government to move forward with mining and fracking without consultation. She was offended and angered by the total lack of respect for Nova Scotians by implying that Nova Scotia is open for sale to the highest bidder. She spoke about the government utilizing Section 26 of the Mineral Resources Act to allow lithium exploration over private lands. This is a direct infringement of Mi'kmaw rights to the land, since absolute title to all lands in Nova Scotia belongs to the Mi'kmaw.

I would like to remind all members in this House that we are on unceded and unsurrendered land of the Mi'kmaw people, which is protected. As a government, we have a duty to consult always. It is not an option.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

COMEAU, ROBERTE: FUNDRAISING - RECOG.

RYAN ROBICHEAU: Speaker, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge Roberte Comeau of Saulnierville.

After being diagnosed with MS in 2015, Roberte found out about the May 50k fundraiser to help raise funds and awareness for MS across Canada. With the endless support of her family and friends, she sets a goal each year of completing this challenge and surpasses it by more than four times the amount every time. In 2023, she raised over \$14,000, earning the title of global top fundraiser. What an incredible achievement.

Congratulations to Roberte for all of her achievements. You're a great motivation to the people in Clare, not only for staying active but to help raise awareness around MS. Keep it up.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

MARTELL, SHERRY: BUS. OWNER - RECOG.

TOM TAGGART: Speaker, on Thursday, March 6th, Tatamagouche resident and business owner Sherry Martell was recognized as one of Atlantic Canada's 25 Most Powerful Women in Business during a gala event at the Delta Hotel in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador hosted by *Atlantic Business* magazine. Martell was one of 200 women nominated for this award, which celebrates businesswomen of influence who live and work in Atlantic Canada. She was recognized as a change maker, enthusiastic supporter of community initiatives, and an advocate dedicated to making space for other women to find and embrace their personal strengths. Along with operating her business, Bountiful Bra Boutique, Martell is currently serving as Municipality of Colchester councillor for District 7, Tatamagouche area, and serves on several committees and boards, including the Tatamagouche food bank. Speaker, I ask all members to recognize the extraordinary achievements of this powerful woman, Sherry Martell.

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

GIFFEN, RILEY, LIAM & OLIVIA: COLDSTREAM CLEAR - RECOG.

HON. SCOTT ARMSTRONG: I rise today to recognize Riley, Liam, and Olivia Giffen who, guided by their parents Rob and Elaine, are a fantastic example of young, successful entrepreneurs.

Coldstream Clear Distillery began with their grand opening in 2015, 10 years ago, at the family property on Coldstream Road in rural Colchester County. Since that time, it has grown significantly in product lines, store locations, and geographic areas of distribution. They currently have store locations in Stewiacke, Antigonish, and Dartmouth Crossing. This Spring, their newest location is opening in Truro. With their production plant in the Truro Business Park, they now employ more than 100 employees across all locations and contribute significantly to the local and provincial economy.

Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Giffens on their continued success and growth and thank them for their contributions to our Nova Scotia economy.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

SEARL, LILLIAN (MISSY): PERIOD EQUITY ALL. SOC. - RECOG.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: I rise today to bring recognition to a good friend of mine, Lillian “Missy” Searl, for her dedicated kindness and compassion in building the Period Equity Alliance Society. It is a grassroots non-profit that has grown out of 15 years of product and fundraising that Missy has done out of her home. She did this to provide personal care products to shelters, churches, and community organizations.

They advocate for the affordability and equitable access to menstrual products, to reduce stigma by providing people with dignity bags. These bags are currently in several schools in HRM, Pugwash, and Kentville. Products can be found in community cupboards and support offices around the HRM.

Speaker, I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in recognizing Missy Searl for following the advice of her mentors and addressing the lack of access to menstrual products for those in underrepresented communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

MACKENZIE-MACKAY, M.: 100TH BIRTHDAY - BEST WISHES

HON. TREVOR BOUDREAU: I rise today to acknowledge Marjorie MacKenzie-MacKay of Sampsonville, who celebrated her 100th birthday on January 6th.

Marjorie spent most of her early life in Soldiers Cove. At 17 she moved to Ontario to help in the war effort, working in a factory. She then returned in 1944 to attend college and become a teacher. Marjorie married Justin MacKenzie in 1948 and together they had seven children. She worked as a teacher in Ontario and in Nova Scotia, retiring in 1982, shortly after Justin's death. In 1983 Marjorie married Donald MacKay. They enjoyed travelling through Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. until his passing.

Marjorie and her family share a passion for Scottish culture. She has sons and grandsons who are pipers. Her grandson Matt MacIsaac composed and played a tune in her name at her birthday celebration.

Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Marjorie on reaching her 100th year.

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

VILLAGE TAPHOUSE: 3RD ANNIV. - RECOG.

RICK BURNS: I rise today to recognize Tim Kohoot of the Village Taphouse, a 36-tap establishment that serves Nova Scotia and Maritime beers, ciders, and spirits. Nearing their third anniversary, the Village Taphouse lends their space to the community for trivia, karaoke, live music, and social events to bring the community together.

Tim's entrepreneurial spirit has been strong since 2002, when he first established a boutique graphic design and web development studio, which has since blossomed into a full-service advertising agency. His expertise extends to business development, architectural and retail space, design, branding, and other comprehensive marketing and development solutions, which are all part of Kohoot Holdings. Tim embodies the entrepreneurial spirit of problem solving, identifying community needs and delivering solutions to those who need them, achieving this while keeping a devoted shop-local mentality.

Speaker, I ask that all members of the Legislature join me in congratulating Tim Kohoot and the folks at the Village Taphouse for these great three years serving our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg, with 20 seconds.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY: CELEB. - RECOG.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I rise to acknowledge all the folks who celebrated St. Patrick's Day yesterday and wisely handed over their keys to a designated driver, and to all our taxi drivers who were so very busy into the wee hours.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The time has expired for Statements by Members.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: SURPRISE AGENDA - EXPLAIN

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Over the last two days, we have heard from dozens of Nova Scotians at the Public Bills Committee. They're outraged by the government's proposals to restrict information, change longstanding policies without consultation, debate, or warning, and interfere with the independence of our universities and post-secondary institutions. The president of the SMU Faculty Union said that changes proposed by this government "will immediately set universities on a chaos course for the indefinite future. Consultation could have and still would avoid such scenarios."

My question is: Why is the government choosing to drive this surprise agenda despite opposition, and will they consult?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable minister of Advanced Education.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I want to thank the member for the question, and I also want to thank all the university presidents whom we met with for over three hours yesterday for the second and third time that we've had meetings with them. We're talking about Bill No. 12. We're talking about bilateral agreements. We're talking about all kinds of things with the universities. The Auditor General made it very clear on what needed to be done. In fact, the Auditor General - and I can quote from the newspaper and table it - said that Bill No. 12 will address these issues.

My question to the Opposition is: Do you support the Auditor General on one hand and not support them on the other?

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Bill No. 12 does a lot more than that. The head of the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union said that the amendments that allow workers to be fired without cause erodes job security, weakens workers' rights, and puts this government on a slippery slope. The information that Nova Scotians rely on - the policies that impact their lives - depend on the non-partisan expertise of these public servants. A presenter last

night said it clearly: “Do you trust public servants to tell hard truths to elected officials when they fear for their jobs?”

My question is: Will this government listen to the public outcry and stop threatening public servants?

THE SPEAKER: Order. (Interruptions)

Order. It doesn’t matter whose fault it is. Let’s do this officially. I’m going to ask the Leader of the Official Opposition whom that question is directed to.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: The Premier.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: A number of these questions have been discussed during Estimates. They’ve been discussed during the legislation that has been introduced in front of the House. What this government is interested in is trying to make sure that government is flexible and is as efficient as possible and is accountable to the public for the money that we spend on their behalf to make sure that we are working to our maximum capacity, and that’s what this legislation’s about.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: One of the dozens of concerned citizens who spoke before the committee yesterday said: “I find this whole process to be undemocratic and regressive.” The Premier did not mention any of the bills that are being amended in his recent campaign and only introduced them after winning a supermajority. There was no warning or consultation on these bills before they were introduced, but now hundreds of Nova Scotians have written, called, and e-mailed with feedback, many of them experts who were not consulted. Will the government finally listen to these experts and to the Nova Scotians who elected them and make the requested changes?

BARBARA ADAMS: The purpose of democracy is to allow everyone to have their say. That is the point, and certainly during the election that was held in October and November, the political landscape looked one way. With the American election that happened, the political landscape has changed, and our government needs to be responsive to those changes. The representatives in Opposition reflect some voices, but they do not reflect all voices. There are 55 members of the Legislature who hear from all constituents and will consider all voices.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

OSD: TRUMP INAUGURATION ATTENDANCE - EXPLAIN

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I can't believe I have to ask this question, but I'm going to ask this question. The Minister of Opportunities and Social Development is responsible for helping the most vulnerable Nova Scotians - families struggling to put food on the table, children in care, and seniors on fixed incomes. Instead of focusing on those priorities, the minister spent time at Donald Trump's inauguration and expensed \$3,000 of taxpayers' dollars to do it. I'll table that. Does the minister believe that attending a presidential inauguration was a better use of time than working to support vulnerable Nova Scotians?

HON. SCOTT ARMSTRONG: This is about building relationships. We are facing the most protectionist administration we've seen in the United States, possibly since the 1970s or before. I was proud to go down to Washington and work as part of Team Canada - which, by the way, included MPs John McKay and Dominic LeBlanc, both of whom are Liberals - and work to try to send our message that we need those tariffs stopped. I was proud to do that. I was working on behalf of Nova Scotia, and I am convinced that we need to do more of that to express our views and get more support as we take on Donald Trump and his tariffs.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Then you would send the Minister of Trade, if that were the case, or you would send the Minister of Growth and Development. This wasn't a trade mission; this wasn't about advocating for Nova Scotia; this was a trip to celebrate the American President, who made it clear he was coming after Canada's institutions. When Nova Scotians were looking for leadership, the minister was billing taxpayers for the trip. Does the minister honestly believe that it was the appropriate use of taxpayers' dollars?

SCOTT ARMSTRONG: As I was saying, I was proud to be part of Team Canada. There were ministers and premiers there from across Canada. I actually did an interview where I was quoted. I'll read from that. I will table it:

Scott Armstrong, the Minister Opportunities and Social Development for Nova Scotia, explained that Michelin has several tire manufacturing plants in his province, employing several thousand people. They are one link in a delicate, interconnected North American supply chain on automobiles, in which different components for a single vehicle might cross the northern border several times - a complicated process upon which to impose major tariffs.

I think I can go to Washington and represent this province and make sure that we protect those jobs, which affects my riding.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Again, I would ask: Why didn't the Minister of Growth and Development or the Minister of Trade represent Nova Scotia on all of the topics that the Minister of Opportunities and Social Development is talking about? There is absolutely no justification for the Minister of Opportunities and Social Development to attend the presidential inauguration. Even before he took office, Trump made it clear he was coming after Canada's institutions. He said: "To me the most beautiful word in the dictionary is 'tariff.'" I'll table that. How does the minister justify using public money for a trip to celebrate the president who's planning on actively harming our economy?

SCOTT ARMSTRONG: As I said, there were premiers; there were ministers of many different departments from provinces across Canada as part of Team Canada. We need to all use the connections and relationships that we have and will have to make sure we take on what I believe is the most protectionist administration. We need all hands on deck. I was proud to be part of that team. I'm proud to represent this province. I have previous experience doing that as a federal Member of Parliament. I was pleased to see several of my former colleagues in Washington. We have Team Canada to get the job done to protect our province and our country, and I was proud to do it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

DHW: PRIMARY CARE - PRIORITIZE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Yesterday, media reported the troubling story of Cathy Croskery, a 58-year-old woman who was not told about her breast cancer diagnosis. She's one of the 95,000 Nova Scotians without a family doctor. For Cathy, that meant a complicated process for screening, and an unacceptable delay in getting results.

While this government moves to consolidate power, Nova Scotians are falling through the cracks in our health care system. Why is this government more interested in its surprise agenda than in helping Nova Scotians get primary care and care by a family doctor?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: The circumstances regarding individuals who are seeking care are very important for us to follow up. We do realize that there has been an issue in terms of the process. I can't speak about individuals, of course, on the floor. We are working very hard and bringing in new physicians. There are over 200 net new physicians in this province as a result of some of the things we've done to change.

We are looking at access points so that individuals who don't have a family practice can still get the screening that they require through self-referral, through mobile units, through VirtualCareNS. What's essential is that we make sure that there are multiple ways for people to access care. We'll continue to look at ways for people to get the care they need, and we'll continue to recruit the professionals we need.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: The apps, the mobile clinics, the access points - they get you to a certain point, but this case shows that they don't get you all of the way there. We've heard both the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Premier, in the last couple of years, opine that maybe not everyone needs a family doctor. This is a case that shows us that that is absolutely not true. Everyone needs to be attached to primary care.

My question again for the Minister of Health and Wellness is: When will we make sure that everyone is attached to those primary care clinics? Because without them, people will continue to fall through the cracks.

MICHELLE THOMPSON: What I want to reassure Nova Scotians is that, as they've seen, the Need a Family Practice registry has come down for at least the past four months in a row, as a result of all of the investments that we've made.

This is not just a Nova Scotia issue. We recognize that there is a global shortage of primary care providers. We have pulled out every stop in order to address this issue in Nova Scotia. We have the PACE clinic. We have a new Cape Breton University medical school that will be started in the fall. We have a number of internationally educated residents who are now coming to Nova Scotia to train.

We understand that there is a shortage. This should have been addressed a number of years ago, but in the last four years we have made significant investment and significant progress. I want to reassure Nova Scotians it will continue.

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

DHW: UNTENDERED CONTRACT - DEFEND

LISA LACHANCE: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. After two meetings with Google during a trip to California, the Premier handed them a \$42 million untendered contract. I'll table that. Because there was no competition for this government money, we don't know if there were Nova Scotian or Canadian companies that could have stepped up to meet our province's needs. Why did this government hand over money to an American company without even letting local companies compete for the contract?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I do appreciate the question. The contract with Google was through an alternative procurement process. We made sure that we had expert clinicians with the Premier and others when they visited Google to understand the benefits from the services they provide. The information and the modalities that we brought back are essential and they are specific to Google.

Being able to use AI to look within a chart to find the information that's required, looking at AI to be able to screen diagnostic imaging in order to support individuals - this

is long-standing technology that Google can stand behind. We are trying to create more opportunities for people to get the care they need in a timely fashion.

[2:15 p.m.]

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, this wasn't the first time this government handed over public money to an American company without letting Nova Scotian companies or Canadian companies compete for a contract. Varian Medical Systems received a sole-sourced contract worth \$152 million back in 2023. At least part of that contract is now on an indefinite hold. A senior medical director for Cancer Care Nova Scotia explained that this was put in place because "there were a lot of near misses" in terms of patients having access to uninterrupted and timely care. I'll table that. Is this indefinite hold increasing the amount that we will pay this American company?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: I'm happy to be able to stand and talk about Varian. We certainly have a valued partnership with Varian. There is a long-standing clinical relationship. Dr. James Robar and Dr. Amanda Caissie have been working with Varian for over 20 years to bring best practices to Nova Scotia. We're very proud of the work that has happened. Ethos is first in North America. It allows for 3-D imaging and precision personalized radiation therapy. We're very happy to be able to provide that to Nova Scotians.

We do have the Oncology Transformation Project under way, and we certainly appreciate when clinicians tell us that we need to do things differently. We're going to continue to listen to clinicians. We're going to continue to implement best practices and the most cutting-edge technology we can.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

PREM: PUBLIC SERVANTS' JOB SECURITY - ENSURE

PAUL WOZNEY: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. People are worried about the changes this government is making to everything from university governance to mining uranium to the public service. Dozens of people have already made their concerns known at the Public Bills Committee. In addition, hundreds of Nova Scotians have sent in their questions for the Premier, including many public servants who sent them to us because they were afraid to speak out publicly as part of the Public Bills Committee. The government needs to be clear with Nova Scotians and government employees: Why does the Premier want to make it easier to lay off hard-working civil servants?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

HON. TWILA GROSSE: As we all know, Nova Scotia is changing. It is growing in ways that we have not seen in decades. We value our public servants. They are the

backbone of our government. We will treat them fairly. This change is being made to allow for flexibility. As Nova Scotia grows, we need to be able to respond quickly to changing conditions.

PAUL WOZNEY: Nothing says we value you like the power to lay you off without cause. The people we are talking about here are hard-working Nova Scotians who make sure our health, education, justice, and many other public services run smoothly. When people are afraid they'll lose their jobs, it impacts morale, productivity, and program quality. Nova Scotians want better health care, better schools, and better government services. Why is the Premier prioritizing his ability to fire public servants over ensuring the job security civil servants need to deliver the supports Nova Scotians rely on them for?

TWILA GROSSE: This is an exciting time for Nova Scotia as we continue to grow, but we also recognize that we need to ensure we have the right skill set at the right time in the right place. We do appreciate our public servants, but this is to allow us to continue to grow and shape the future of Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

FTB: SEAFOOD TARIFFS EXEMPTION - SECURE

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Speaker, Nova Scotians are very concerned about what is happening with seafood tariffs. I have a question specifically related to the tariffs that China is putting on lobster from Canada, and the work that the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and his ministerial assistant should be doing to assess the degree and extent of this economic impact with the expectation that these Chinese tariffs may stand. Given that in the past strong provincial engagement helped prevent Nova Scotia's seafood from being targeted, what steps is the department taking to secure an exemption for this vital industry for Nova Scotia?

HON. JOHN LOHR: First of all, I want to recognize the importance of our seafood industry to Nova Scotia and recognize that both the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the Premier have been working very hard on this file. They have been in Europe and at the Boston Seafood Show. The Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture has been throughout Asia as we work on trying to diversify the markets that we have for the seafood sector.

We have some of the highest quality, if not the highest quality, seafood in the world. We know there will be other markets for this as we deal with the real impact of tariffs on this sector.

IAIN RANKIN: What I'm hearing from the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board is that this government is not as interested in the Chinese market - our second-largest market besides the United States. Both of those markets are now putting on tariffs. The last

time China imposed tariffs on Canada, lobsters were not included because the previous provincial government had built strong dialogue and spent a lot of time and energy with the trading partner of China. The PC government vehemently disparaged those efforts and missions to China and opposed them, and I think they still oppose them.

Given the potential ripple effects on our local industries, has the Province taken any steps to engage with Ottawa to re-evaluate the 100 per cent tariff on EVs, and explore negotiations with China to ease the impact on our local economy, especially in light of these challenges that our seafood sector is taking on right now?

JOHN LOHR: I want to assure the seafood industry that we couldn't have two individuals working harder on their behalf than the Premier and the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. We also have in Budget 2025-26 - which I hope the member will support - \$200,000 to diversify the international seafood markets and also funding for a seafood sector strategy. We've provisioned for some strategic planning in the budget, and we're working to diversify the markets in the reality of these tariffs. We're working hard for the industry.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

PSC: PUB. SERV. EMPLOYEES - RETAIN

PAUL WOZNEY: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Public Service Commission. Yesterday, we heard from a number of retired public servants at the Public Bills Committee. A former government lawyer noted that with the proposed changes from this government, essential public health leaders would have less job security than casual staff at Tim Hortons. My question is: How does the minister expect to recruit and retain highly skilled employees under these conditions?

HON. TWILA GROSSE: If I am correct, I believe the question was with regard to a health employee - how we intend to retain health workers. Number 1, health workers are not under the Public Service Commission. They are under the Nova Scotia Health Authority, which is the largest employer in Nova Scotia. This change is not done to hurt the employees. We respect our employees and what they do. We want to make a better, stronger public service . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

PAUL WOZNEY: Health care workers and other public employees in Nova Scotia are stretched to provide the services that Nova Scotians need. Nova Scotia has many vacancies in health care and across the public service. Changes that enable the government to fire public employees without cause are very likely to lead to additional vacancies by

making currently vacant jobs significantly less attractive than those available elsewhere in Canada. My question is: At a time when we need to ensure more people want to work in our province, why is the government making short-sighted changes that will chase people away?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Actually, what I would say is that the investments we've made in health care over the last four years have turned out to be an incredible recruitment tool. We see people from across the world and across the country wanting to come home and work in health care in Nova Scotia as a result of the investment and the fact that we are listening to health care workers on a regular basis. We do continue to have vacancies, but we've expanded programs.

There are 200 more physicians in Nova Scotia this year over last year. We have an incredible number of nurses who are working throughout Nova Scotia Health. Those jobs didn't exist before. We've expanded programs. We've expanded opportunities. We continue to work with health care workers and with operators to understand how best to recruit. We are very pleased with the work that's happened to date, and we feel that we've been quite successful.

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

PREM: HARMFUL POLICIES - REVERSE

LINA HAMID: Nova Scotians are standing up and speaking up for democracy. During the Public Bills Committee, we heard from dozens of experts and citizens from across the province. It is clear that Nova Scotians are overwhelmingly opposed to this government's plans to tamper with freedom of information, erode the government transparency and accountability, and fire public servants without cause. When will the Premier listen to Nova Scotians and reverse this government's harmful policies?

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

HON. JOHN LOHR: We are listening to Nova Scotians, and I can give the member numerous examples. We have a school food lunch program, which their party did not support. We are doing things to bring this province forward. We're doing resource development. We are doing many different things, and we will stand on that. We will continue to push this province forward, to work for this province, to make this province stronger, to have a bright, bright future for our province.

LINA HAMID: I was referring to this current time. The Premier is on record saying that bills were not amended during Law Amendments Committee meetings. We provided proof that, in fact, more than 300 bills were amended through this process. The Premier

has yet to correct the public record, but we are glad to set it straight. After listening to the overwhelmingly negative reaction to this government's plan yesterday, will the Premier keep charging ahead with this agenda that nobody voted for?

JOHN LOHR: I realize the member is new. Bills are amended in the Committee of the Whole House. We will continue to work for the province of Nova Scotia. We will continue to create a brighter future. We're the party reducing taxes. We're the party putting in a school food lunch program. We're the party investing in schools and hospitals - things Nova Scotians need. We'll stand on that.

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

DNR: RESOURCE EXTRACTION BANS LIFTING - STOP

LISA LACHANCE: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. As we heard at Public Bills, Nova Scotians are against this government's plans to lift bans on fracking and uranium mining. This government may call them special interests, but in reality, these are Nova Scotians who are concerned about their land, drinking water, and air, and they want real economic progress across Nova Scotia. Will this government listen to Nova Scotians and focus on making real economic progress, address our very deep productivity challenge, and be treated as respectful partners in Nova Scotia's future?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: I really think the people who work in natural resources here in Nova Scotia would be very disappointed to hear that it's not a real economic venture. We have a lot of people who work in our resource sector. This is an avenue that we are looking at because of the change in the world - what's going on in the south. We have an opportunity to be self-reliant on many things here. We're investigating, and as we investigate, conversations are going to take place. We're working on this full-heartedly for Nova Scotians, in a safe, prudent manner, as we said right from the get-go.

LISA LACHANCE: Just a couple of clarifications. One is that I simply did not imply that natural resource development wasn't real. In fact, I've asked the minister a number of questions: What do we know about investment? What are we targeting? How many jobs and when? What are we telling Nova Scotians?

What's happening right now is not a conversation. We're telling people - name calling and taglines. What Nova Scotians need, want, and have a right to is information and engagement. It's simply respectful, and all of these changes are happening without the province fulfilling its constitutional obligations with the Mi'kmaq. Why won't this government demonstrate respect for all Nova Scotians, and work together with everyone for our shared future?

TORY RUSHTON: My reputation with our conversations with many stakeholders, including our Mi'kmaq friends - it speaks volumes. We engage with them on a regular basis

through my department. Just because we're talking about resource development does not mean that's going to change. The Mi'kmaw people will be part of this conversation, but to be very frank, we cannot have conversations about uranium until we lift this ban, and that's the process.

[2:30 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

FTB: CARBON TAX REVENUE - DIVULGE

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: My question is for the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board. Like many Nova Scotians, I was so glad to hear that effective April 1st, the consumer carbon tax will be paused on fuel, effectively removing 17.61 cents per litre on gasoline here in Nova Scotia.

However, there are more changes that we need. Nova Scotians are paying tax on tax. So if there's tax - HST being charged on the federal excise tax is 10 cents per litre. There's HST being charged on the provincial motor fuel tax - that's 15.5 cents per litre. Nova Scotians are paying tax on tax, and that must be removed. This government also made millions of dollars applying HST on the carbon tax, all while blaming the Opposition of the day. We'll table that.

Can the minister tell us how much revenue the government got from the carbon tax?

HON. JOHN LOHR: I can tell the member that we have, in the last four years, provided four budgets in a row that were deficits, that gave us small surpluses. We invested even in that, furthermore, in things people in Nova Scotia needed, like the School Lunch Program, the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. So that money has been well invested in the needs of Nova Scotia. We will continue to do that. We welcome the end of the consumer carbon tax. We welcome that and we are reducing taxes ourselves. I hope the member will support our budget.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: My question was: How much revenue did the government generate from charging HST on top of the carbon tax? I'm also wondering: How much revenue has the government generated from charging a 5 per cent non-resident provincial deed transfer tax?

There are people in this province who have children like I do. I have a son who's now serving in the Navy in British Columbia. If he decided to buy a property here in Nova Scotia, to have a cottage or have a place to come home to when he visits us - he's serving in our Canadian military - he is going to be charged more. There's a disincentive for him to actually own property in his own province.

Can the minister tell us: Does he believe this is removing an interprovincial barrier?

JOHN LOHR: I'll remind the member: We are doing a \$500 million tax cut, which will benefit every Nova Scotian family. In terms of the non-resident deed transfer tax, what I will say is I had an e-mail recently, a couple of days ago, from a young family that said: "Thank you for doing this. We recently lost out bidding against a family from another province who wanted a cottage. We lost that home because we couldn't compete with that. Thank you for doing this."

This is for Nova Scotians to be able to live in these homes. If your son wants to come back - we hope he will and live here - he will have that opportunity too. If you're moving to Nova Scotia to live here, you do not pay that tax. This is not an interprovincial trade barrier.

THE SPEAKER: Before I move on, there were a couple of members who are with the government party, who said "table that, table that." You have to quote verbatim from the document or piece of paper in order to table it. The minister did not do that.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

DNR: URANIUM BAN LIFT - EXPLAIN

KENDRA COOMBES: Nova Scotians across the province are alarmed by the government's reckless plan to overturn bans on uranium mining with no consultation or conversation. Yesterday at Public Bills Committee, we heard from landowners and citizens who are worried about the impacts of uranium mining and fracking on their land and water. My question is: Can the Minister of Natural Resources explain why this government is pushing ahead with this policy that Nova Scotians are overwhelmingly opposed to?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: We know and had discussions during Estimates that uranium is not just a mineral that's needed for energy consumption and for health care; it's also a safety issue with well water and things. Right now in Nova Scotia, we can't even study where the uranium base is, the quantity and quality of it. In order to do that, the ban does need to be lifted in order to study that. We have heard from Nova Scotians who are interested to know exactly where uranium is in their communities and how can they defend themselves on it.

KENDRA COOMBES: The government could still do their homework first and consult and do their duty before they ever bring a piece of legislation to this floor. When land is contaminated, it's Nova Scotians who are left footing the bill. In 2019, the Auditor General found that the province recorded a staggering \$370 million liability for contaminated sites. Last year, the liability at a former mine site grew to \$146 million. Despite the costly history, this government is recklessly rushing forward. My question is:

Can the minister explain why it is pushing the industry interests ahead of taxpayers and the environment?

TORY RUSHTON: Something I want to point out: My good colleague in the Department of Environment and Climate Change ensures that when there is a project - it doesn't matter what mineral - that takes place, there are reclamation plans that are put in place, which are on the backs of the investors and the company, not the taxpayers of Nova Scotia.

It's not the historical tailings that we've seen in Nova Scotia. By the way, we have investors coming to Nova Scotia to have those conversations about those historical tailings. They want to help us clean those up while they are also investing in the critical minerals that we have right here in our province of Nova Scotia.

We can make this an economic benefit to clean up historical mine tailings and put another economic spin on our critical minerals here in Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

RTA: UNIV. RENT CAP EXCLUSIONS - EXPLAIN

SUSAN LEBLANC: We were shocked to find out recently that this government's temporary rent cap does not apply to university residences. Students living at the Atlantic School of Theology residence are now facing a 25 per cent increase to their rents. As one student explained: "It feels like they're taking advantage of a loophole to exploit students." I will table that. My question to the minister is: Why did this government leave a loophole for universities in the temporary rent cap?

HON. JILL BALSER: I thank the member for this important question. We know that it's a difficult time for students, of course, raising the question around the decision that was made by the university in terms of increasing the rent. I just want to make note that university dorms aren't covered under the Residential Tenancies program here in Nova Scotia, but that goes for every jurisdiction across Canada. Nova Scotia is not unique in that sense.

We also want to make sure that we're focusing on student needs, looking at the investments being made in housing, because that is what we've been saying all along: With the improvements in housing, we want to make sure that we're making the right investments and focusing on the needs of students. I appreciate the students asking this question. It's not included in the Residential Tenancies program.

SUSAN LEBLANC: The minister's answer just reminds me to ask where the student housing strategy is.

I will change topics slightly. This isn't the only loophole that was left in the rent cap. We also have the fixed-term lease loophole. Fixed-term leases allow landlords to evict tenants at the end of their lease without cause. Some landlords, as we have heard, have been misusing this type of lease to raise rents above the five per cent rent cap every single year. The effects are clear: The cost of housing and tenant evictions are both skyrocketing. I'll table that. Why is this government refusing to end the ability to misuse fixed-term leases in Nova Scotia?

JILL BALSER: I want to take the opportunity to remind Nova Scotians if they have any questions about a lease to speak to their landlord, if that's an option, but to come to the Residential Tenancies program with any questions they might have.

Again, our focus on increasing the housing supply is also creating more options for Nova Scotians. We want to make sure Nova Scotians have the ability to be able to move and to be able to choose a home that's important for them. We are also seeing changes in our vacancy rates. We know the investments we have been making are improving. Again, anybody who has a question, come to the Residential Tenancies program. Come to all of us at our constituency offices. We're making sure Nova Scotians have the right information they need.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armadale.

DHW: DOCTOR WAIT-LIST REDUCTIONS - CLARIFY

ROD WILSON: My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Last week, the government announced that the wait-list of people looking for attachment to primary care had been reduced by 8,000. Yet the minister has repeatedly said in the Legislature that the government couldn't disclose where these people are, as data validation is ongoing. It's truly perplexing that the government can claim thousands of people are off the list with no supporting evidence tabled, while also pointing out data is still inaccurate.

How did the government arrive at the number of 8,000?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: The Nova Scotia Health Authority and the primary care team that works there are responsible for attaching individuals through the primary care strategy and making sure people are attached. I have faith in that team. These are clinicians, these are doctors, these are nurses, and these are managers who've worked in the Nova Scotia Health Authority for a long time. They work tirelessly, and I believe they are telling the truth, unlike the member opposite.

They are telling people that we . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. I'd ask the minister to please take that back.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MICHELLE THOMPSON: I do believe that the individuals who are managing that list are, in fact, giving us factual information . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. I'm going to recognize the honourable Minister of Health and Wellness in order to retract the statement in regard to the unparliamentary language.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MICHELLE THOMPSON: I retract the statement.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Time's up as well. Sorry.

The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

ROD WILSON: Before I continue, I'd like to call a point of order. (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order. Points of order are afterward. If it's a point of order on what the minister has said and then retracted, you may as well forget it, because the minister has retracted it.

The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

ROD WILSON: I also think it would be helpful if the minister chose to apologize. However, moving on to my question . . .

THE SPEAKER: You can keep talking, but the microphone's not on. I'm going to recognize you. You have 36 seconds. I ask that you ask your question. If you have a point of order other than the one that we've already discussed here on the floor, then you're more than welcome to after Question Period.

The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

ROD WILSON: The minister is confident in the numbers. I've been told the majority of people who are finally getting attachment to primary care live mostly in the Halifax Metro region, with little change in rural Nova Scotia. Without supporting data, will the minister confirm this is true or not?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: We work very hard when we bring new primary care providers into communities to make sure it's a good fit. People are being attached across this province as we are able to recruit physicians, nurse practitioners, and other team members to various clinics across the province. There are a number of clinics that are being expanded, and as a result of this expansion, all across Nova Scotia people are being

attached. We're very pleased with the work of the primary care team. They have their shoulder to the wheel. They are not leaving one stone unturned. I'm confident in their numbers and their reporting.

[2:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

DPW: CANSO CAUSEWAY ROUNDABOUT DELAY - ADDRESS

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Speaker, we're hearing reports out of the Strait area about a project that has really been on the books for a number of years. That's the rotary project, the roundabout at the Canso Causeway. We're getting reports out of the Strait area that it's cancelled, or that it's paused or that it's delayed. This is something that the former Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, MLA for Inverness, Allan MacMaster, worked very hard on and was very passionate about. My question to the Minister of Public Works is: Can he confirm that that project has been cancelled or delayed?

HON. FRED TILLEY: We understand the safety issue at the Port Hawkesbury roundabout. That project is not cancelled. We understand that it's a key trade route for Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada, as a matter of fact. We're working very hard to make sure that that project goes forward and gets completed for the residents of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: What we're looking for is detail. We have heard from multiple sources that the project's scope has changed. We're hearing from multiple sources that it has been scaled back. This is something that former MLA Allan MacMaster was a champion for for the community in the Strait area for years. We see there's a safety component to this. There's a trade component to this. Again, we have heard from multiple sources around government and in the community that this project now has been altered. My question to the minister is: Is the project going as Allan MacMaster and the people of the Strait advocated for, or has the project been altered?

FRED TILLEY: Speaker, I am very proud of the work of the Department of Public Works. We have introduced \$500 million in . . . (interruption). I guess that's funny, Speaker. But \$500 million is half a billion dollars into the road infrastructure of Nova Scotia. We will deliver that project safely, improve traffic flow, and a tender will be issued this year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ECC: ENV. RACISM PANEL REPORT - RELEASE

SUZY HANSEN: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. The recommendations from the Environmental Racism Panel were due to the province at the end of 2023. In 2024, the report was given to the department. We haven't heard a word about the recommendations that the panel gave. I would like to ask the minister: After he reassured Nova Scotians that we would hear back from this panel, why hasn't he released the report and made it public?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: As all members would know, the Environmental Racism Panel is one of many groups that were brought together to advise government. We value the work that this panel did, the work that they produced, and the recommendations that they have brought forward to the government department. Racism of any sort, whether it's environmental or not, is unacceptable. This report and recommendations that were given to the government department are being used by all government departments. This is an entire government approach in order to deal with the issues that the panel wanted to be addressed. All government is reviewing those projects and working on the recommendations.

SUZY HANSEN: Speaker, when will the minister release the Environmental Racism Panel's report?

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Pursuant to Rule 5C, I move that the hours for March 19th be 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: I ask the honourable Government House Leader to state the date again.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Pursuant to Rule 5C, I move that the hours for March 19th be 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. with Late Debate to follow.

THE SPEAKER: Pursuant to Rule 5C, there has been a request for the hours for March 19th be from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

So be it. Scary.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I'm just on autopilot. Sorry. It's habit to stand up and give the hours. It's a courtesy to the members opposite.

Speaker, would you please call the order of business Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 24.

Bill No. 24 - Temporary Access to Land Act and Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. FRED TILLEY: Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 24, also known as the JRTA Act. Ensuring a bright future for Nova Scotians is a priority for this government. We want to increase our resilience, grow our economy, and unlock our province's potential. We need to move people and goods faster and advancing these goals requires change. We have to do things differently and eliminate barriers and that is exactly what we are doing as we transform the JRTA into Link Nova Scotia.

Our growing communities need transportation options and improved connectivity. The reliable movement of people and goods supports our economy, supports trade, and ensures that people get to work faster. We need a system that's dependable, efficient, and safe. These amendments lay the groundwork for that future transportation system.

The evolution of the agency broadens its scope beyond a one-time, HRM-specific transportation review. It updates the agency's governing structure, it creates new ministerial authorities, and it establishes the ability to create regulations. This is how we will fix traffic and provide transportation solutions for the entire province.

As Minister of Public Works, I am so proud of the work that the JRTA has done. Across the country, this organization has received praise for taking a proactive, innovative, and collaborative approach to transportation solutions. Our government showed leadership and vision when it created the JRTA in 2021. Now it's time for Link Nova Scotia to take the next step and expand the agency's work to all Nova Scotians. If we're going to unlock

our province's potential, we have a lot of work to do. The transportation sector is no exception.

We have plans to ease congestion on Highway No. 102. We're twinning our major highways and building new interchanges. We're looking at light rail and looking to leverage federal transit dollars. Link Nova Scotia will be at the centre of all this activity and more, and it can't wait. We need to transform this agency, better equipping the organization to work with our partners and make those projects happen.

Over the past two years, we have built strong partnerships and relationships with HRM, the port, the airport, Halifax Harbour Bridges, ACOA, and CN. Together we have built momentum, and these amendments will move our work into the fast lane. That's not going to change. I know much has been made about decision making authority laid out in the Act. While that is necessary to make sure we can get the job done, it's also the option that we are least likely to use.

We will continue to work together with municipalities and listen to their concerns. Just recently, we met with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities. We heard their concerns, and we took action. As a result of that conversation, we have made several changes that will improve this amendment. This co-operation and coordination will continue.

At the end of the day, we want to fix traffic. We want to give people and businesses every opportunity to be successful. We want to make sure that we link Nova Scotian communities so that they can move people and goods, growing our economy and improving lives. We're ready to make the changes that will make this possible.

I'm also pleased to touch briefly on the amendments proposed in the Temporary Access to Land Act. While our government is pleased with the strides we've made so far to address the challenges we've seen in our housing market, we know there's more work to be done to ensure that our communities are equipped to handle the tremendous growth we're seeing across the province. To that end, this Act demonstrates another way that this government is working to ensure that important developments that align with provincial priorities can move forward when facing roadblocks.

These amendments will create a process for resolving stalemate situations - when a property owner can't reach an agreement with an adjacent property owner to get the access they need to complete construction and repairs. This new process will be limited to cases where property owners can show that they have acted in good faith and that they have taken reasonable steps to reach an agreement with their neighbouring property and those efforts have failed.

This process would also apply to situations where the neighbouring property owner cannot be identified, located, or reached. You won't be able to use this process to build an

addition on your single-family home or duplex; it will be available only for those working on commercial, institutional, industrial, or multi-residential buildings or infrastructure projects. Of course, it's our hope that neighbouring property owners will continue to reach agreements themselves without intervention from the province. When that's not the case, this new process will provide an efficient and transparent option for resolving those situations, and it will help ensure that important projects can move forward.

Regulations will be developed to clarify the provincial priorities that will guide decisions about applications, compensation for property owners, and other key items. We look forward to making this new process available for Nova Scotians. I look forward to the comments from my colleagues across the aisle.

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

[3:00 p.m.]

KENDRA COOMBES: We have some concerns about this bill, but we are also eager to hear more at the Public Bills Committee from Nova Scotians. This bill has the potential to enhance transportation across the province and support the construction of more housing, but as in other bills, the PCs have introduced this bill but seek to bypass meaningful consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders. This time, the Minister of Public Works is being granted the power to decide what transportation projects municipalities will take on and how much of the cost municipalities will shoulder for these projects.

We are opposed to the increased powers being granted to the Minister of Public Works, but we are in favour of better transit plans and building more homes. This bill has the potential to support both of those things.

I think it's important to talk about this bill and break it down. This bill contains two parts: a change to the name and the responsibility of the Joint Regional Transportation Agency and the creation of a new avenue for developers to temporarily gain access to adjacent land. In these changes, we continue to see increased concentration of power in the hands of ministers.

The Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act changes would include renaming the agency to Link Nova Scotia and expanding the scope of the agency beyond the HRM and surrounding areas. The minister would be granted the power to decide the regional zone to be covered, moving the management and control of the affairs of his agency from a board of directors to the Minister of Public Works.

As I said, it means replacing the board of directors with an advisory board, and creating a technical advisory committee with the HRM, the Halifax Port Authority, the

Halifax Airport Authority, the Halifax Harbour Bridges, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency - also known as ACOA - and the Department of Public Works.

I want to keep in mind that when the Board of Directors was created, the government never actually filled any of those positions. There didn't even seem to be an attempt to fill those positions, so we don't know how great a board would have worked versus an advisory. It appears that there actually may not have been a thought to fulfilling them, as far as I can see.

Creating new ministerial order-making powers to work with municipalities on their street and infrastructures is another part of this. With these amendments, it was emphasized that agencies under the new name would pursue funding opportunities. The minister said during a press release that the Act would allow the department better access to federal funding like transit funds, although neither the department nor the minister have specified the federal funding in question. It could be the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund and the Canada Public Transit Fund. Both aim to create dense communities connected to the public transit.

Municipalities have expressed concerns with these changes. They are worried about having to take on debt for projects they did not approve of. I think this is a valid concern and I'm sure we're going to be hearing from people. As someone who spent a lot of time studying municipal affairs, as someone who is the critic of municipal affairs and spent time on council, the fact that municipalities sound alarms on things or share concerns is often one of those things that grab your attention. Municipalities don't often do it unless it becomes necessary for them.

The other part of this bill is An Act Respecting Temporary Access to Adjacent Land, which involves creating a pathway for developers to gain temporary access to adjacent land that they are working on, with the requirement to return the land to its original state. I can understand why property owners could be concerned about this. You can never really return land to its natural state once you have disturbed it. You can try, but it never really goes back to the way it was.

This is a concern for many people - having someone just be able to access their lands. Whether they can find them or not, this is an important topic that could open the door and create more problems later. As we've seen with the Australian company that wanted access to someone's land, this can open the door for more of those things. This can open the door for more expropriations of land from landowners.

As I said, there are some good parts of this bill. There is transit and building of homes. My hope is that these homes would be affordable or deeply affordable housing - that is what is needed here in Nova Scotia - and better transit that links Nova Scotia together. I think those things are great, but what always seems to happen in these bills is that concerning powers and concerning other add-ins into these bills always seem to

happen. A bill that could be really good turns into a bill that might have a poisonous pill in it.

I have some questions for the government. I hope the minister, in his closing remarks, might be able to address them.

Why does it seem like this government is overriding municipalities and forcing them to take on debt for projects that they didn't approve? If municipalities are responsible for funding of these projects, why don't they have full control over decision making? Why is the government packaging two unrelated pieces of legislation together without a clear explanation of how they are connected? If this bill is not about unlocking federal housing and transit funding, why hasn't the government been upfront about this? Why is the government making changes to the JRTA before the current behind-schedule Regional Transportation Plan is even finished? How can Nova Scotians trust that the government is going to deliver this plan when they still haven't delivered on the plans that have already been promised with regard to the JRTA? If this government is serious about public transit and housing density, why is there no clear timeline or funding commitment for these projects this bill is supposed to support?

I look forward to, hopefully, the minister answering those questions, and I look forward, as do all of us, to hearing from Nova Scotians at Public Bills on this bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Speaker, I'm pleased to say a few words on Bill No. 24 as we have it before the House now. I guess it informs the direction of the government that loves power, hates transparency, likes to give themselves more order-making power - which this bill clearly does - and moves in a direction that, if they're not in agreement with what a given municipality wants to do - if there's some disagreement - they're going to step in and start building infrastructure that maybe a town or municipality isn't on side with.

The JRTA did some good work. I really liked their spirit of collaboration. They even met with Opposition MLAs. The head of the organization at the time has changed. I do respect the new head of the organization immensely as well. I hope that some of that collaboration will continue. There were some official mechanisms where there was collaboration with municipalities.

This seems to be more of an exercise of control rather than just leading the process. I could be wrong, but when there's language that the Province can now step in and order work to be done without any explanation of who's paying the cost, then I have some challenges supporting that, especially since the JRTA was only created a short time ago. They had one main purpose, and that was to create the report and the study. Before that study was even presented publicly, they no longer exist.

Now we have a new entity called Link Nova Scotia. We hope that, in some time, we will see this report published, as was the commitment. It is late, and the minister himself did admit that they have some parts of this report. They've made announcements before and after the election of some of the things that were found to be useful in the report - some infrastructure projects. I think that really the concern is around transparency and losing the spirit of collaboration.

We see some of this movement in other provinces. One standout example is dismantling bike lanes in Ontario. This bill does, in fact, give power to the Province to do things of that nature, and similarly to other bills that are before the House, when ministers are asked - whether it's universities, transportation, the Auditor General or other institutions that are being challenged - the answer predictably is, No, we wouldn't do that, or, No, we wouldn't want to do that. But in fact, the legislative amendments that they're making in subsequent bills are always giving the authority for the current or future minister or future governments to start taking control and not having any specified mechanism of who pays the bills.

We know that the Province in general has preferred vehicle traffic over transit and over active transit. That's just a fact, no matter what party has been in power. Municipalities and those who run for council often have platforms on promoting more active transportation and improving transit, and the Province really hasn't been in the game of transit for a very long time. So I do get especially concerned when the move is to take this to a province-wide approach and not allow the voice of municipalities to be a true partner at the table to talk about how we can pull people out of single-occupancy vehicles and promote that more sustainable mode of transportation when it's completely focused on vehicle traffic, even though there's language around facilitating more transit. Whether it's big transit projects or anything of that nature, I think municipalities certainly have expertise to be engaged in that in a true partnership way.

Those are some of my concerns, but I do expect we'll probably hear from those, especially at the municipal level at the Public Bills Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to say some words on that.

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

LISA LACHANCE: I'm pleased to rise and ask a few questions and raise a few concerns about Bill No. 24. I was interested to hear the minister refer to changes that will be coming on the basis of consultation to this very bill. I think this really highlights that this is yet another bill this government brought forward with insufficient consultation and with insufficient policy development.

I guess what I would really invite this government to think about is that we have heard lots about your perceived strength of mandate, and so you can use it. You can use it, and you can engage people respectfully. You can engage all stakeholders. You can do the

research necessary so that when bills come to the floor of the House, they're ready, and actually we get a chance to look at the substance of them without having stakeholders in an uproar showing up to Public Bills, writing us letters, and then not having ministers have to go meet with the core stakeholders of each bill, and then backtrack. That's just what I would maybe suggest going forward - to fully cook some bills before you drop them on the House.

Secondly, what I would say is that while I understand that in second reading these cannot be amended, you can still share that information with Nova Scotians. I think it was deeply disappointing that we went through a very long day of Public Bills where people were very engaged in the discussion and government couldn't say, Oh, you know - even not the specific amendments - in this section of FOIPOP, everyone's confused. We've heard there are tweaks, but we don't know what they are. So that means everyone needs to be engaged on the full substance of the bill, and so this is another one.

[3:15 p.m.]

We're going to go to Public Bills. People are going to want to come talk about it. We think there are changes coming, but we don't know. The minister could share what the proposed changes are so that everyone who comes to Public Bills Committee is making the best use of their time, our time, and the best consideration of this bill. Really, I think we can do better, folks, in policy development. I think the first step to that is taking the time that's needed to speak with key stakeholders and to do the right research.

I'm not commenting on the Link Nova Scotia provisions. My colleague did that.

I note that in Bill No. 24, there are the "temporary access to land" provisions. There are also some private ways provisions in Bill No. 1. I would invite the minister to explain how these two bills are connected and how they work together. Has any potential conflict between the two bills been identified? How will things be determined to be relevant under each Act, as landowners or project proponents will want to use what's provided there? I really would love an explanation of how that all works together.

I think the other thing is, we have learned - I mean, I've learned - and we have heard lots from the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs. Everything is subject to consultation with the Mi'kmaw Nation, but particularly things about land. I think any time we see the word "land," it links - see what I did there? I don't know if the minister heard my joke. I'll repeat it another time. It was really good - it links to that question: Was the mandatory consultation done?

Further, my question is around these proposed changes. Are these making it easier for Nova Scotians? Are they making it easier for landlords? Also, to be transparent - if this is about making it easier for folks to access private lands for, as is set out this bill, industrial purposes, let's talk about that. What does that actually mean?

Bill No. 1 is not what we're talking about today, but I want to understand how it all pieces together. Bill No. 1, in the Private Ways Act, talks about now needing to go to Nova Scotia Supreme Court to resolve disputes over land access. Is this better for Nova Scotians? Bill No. 24, which is before us today, directs Nova Scotians to apply to the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board. Again, is this going to work better for Nova Scotians? Why is this change being brought forward?

I mentioned before that I have reviewed the 1984 uranium report from Nova Scotia. Certainly, the issue of exploration being done without the consent of landowners was a huge issue that really informed the policies that were made because people were not feeling like their private land rights were being respected. I'm curious about doing this. Frankly, it's kind of hidden in Bill No. 1, and I would also say that I'm grateful it's in the title of this bill. These are really significant issues, and the way that they have been presented does not offer stakeholders in Nova Scotia a chance to give them due consideration.

With that, I will take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I'll stand and make a few comments on Bill No. 24. First of all, I would like to acknowledge to the minister that it seems the intent of Bill No. 24 is to enhance transportation and streamline land access for development projects. However, there have been concerns expressed regarding specific provisions that may negatively impact municipal autonomy and municipal governance. I'll just highlight three key concerns that I have with the bill.

The first one is provincial overreach into municipal planning. Bill No. 24 does grant the Minister of Public Works the authority to issue orders to municipalities concerning transportation projects, potentially overriding local decisions that the municipalities have made. The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities has expressed that such provisions are "tremendously concerning," as they could undermine municipal autonomy and disregard the unique needs and priorities of local communities. I will table that. It's from a CBC article. I have one, as well, where Mayor Pam Mood had made a quote. Those are going to be brought in to me here in a few moments.

The second key concern I have is with the lack of consultation with municipalities themselves. This bill does allow the minister to act without notifying the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, bypassing established protocols for municipal engagement. This, many would believe, is a weakening of democracy, which is a theme that we have seen here in this sitting especially. This lack of consultation with municipalities - this exclusion - may lead to decisions that do not reflect the perspectives and expertise of municipal leaders, which is disrespectful to them, resulting in infrastructure developments misaligned with local plans and community interests. In a strong democracy, we listen to the voices of the local people.

The third key concern I have is centralization of decision-making. The transfer of management and control of Link Nova Scotia from a board of directors to the Minister of Public Works does centralize authority and reduces the checks and balances in transportation planning. This centralization could diminish the role of municipalities in shaping transportation projects that directly affect their communities, leading to a one-size-fits-all approach that may not address specific local needs.

I do have three recommendations for the minister. First is to amend the bill to ensure municipal consultation and reinstate requirements for the minister to notify and consult with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities - it's the right thing to do - and affected municipalities before issuing orders related to transportation projects that affect them. This approach would respect municipal expertise and provide collaborative decision making, which we believe is the right thing to do, resulting in transportation solutions that are both efficient and locally appropriate.

My second recommendation to the minister is to establish clear guidelines for ministerial orders that would define specific criteria and limitations for the exercise of ministerial powers to prevent potential overreach and ensure that municipal autonomy is preserved. Clear guidelines would provide transparency and predictability and allow municipalities to plan and execute their responsibilities effectively without unexpected provincial interventions.

My third recommendation to the minister is to maintain a balanced governance structure for Link Nova Scotia. Consider retaining a board of directors with municipal representation to oversee Link Nova Scotia, ensuring that diverse perspectives inform the transportation planning and that their decisions reflect the interests of all stakeholders. A balanced governance structure would enhance accountability and trust between our provincial and municipal governments, fostering co-operation and shared responsibility in developing important transportation infrastructure.

In conclusion, while the objectives of Bill No. 24 aim to improve transportation and land access, it is crucial to address these concerns to prevent potential negative impacts on municipal autonomy, transparency, and public trust. We encourage a collaborative approach involving provincial and municipal governments, stakeholders, and the public to refine the bill for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: If I am to recognize the honourable Minister of Public Works, it will be to close second reading.

The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. FRED TILLEY: I move to close debate on Bill No. 24, Temporary Access to Land Act and Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 24, Temporary Access to Adjacent Land Act and amendments to the Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Public Bills.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Speaker, that concludes Government Business for today. I move that the House now rise to meet again March 19th between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Following the Daily Routine and Question Period will be Opposition Business. I ask that you recognize the honourable House Leader of the NDP to call Opposition Business for tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable House Leader for the Official Opposition.

LISA LACHANCE: Tomorrow we will be calling the bill that was tabled today, Bill No. 86, Bill No. 87, and Resolution No. 21.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise to meet again on Wednesday, March 19th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until March 19th.

[The House rose at 3:26 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 106**

By: Julie Vanexan (Kings South)

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

Whereas the Acadia Axewoman Swim team took second place at the 2025 Bell AUS Swimming Championship; and

Whereas this accomplishment goes to the team as a whole as the overall standings from their individual races and combined efforts. With this second-place win, we want to recognize the individual woman who made this happen. Anna Whittaker took bronze in the 200m Butterfly, Ella Collins won gold for 50m Breaststroke, Chloe Popp took silver in the 50m Breaststroke, Cassidy Karrel won silver for the 100m Freestyle, and Sophie Rooney won sold in the 200m Backstroke, while Grace Earle took bronze; and

Whereas with this well-fought U Sports qualifiers secured, the team now turns their focus to the national stage at the 2025 U Sports National Championship at the University of Toronto in March;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Axewomen swim team and let them know that Nova Scotia is behind them as they go for gold in Toronto.

RESOLUTION NO. 107

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Adam Secord, a coach of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by guiding the team to clinch the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and

celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Adam Secord's commitment to guide this baseball team from humble beginnings to provincial champions showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 108

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Aiden Langille, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Aiden Langille's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 109

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Austin Briggs, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Austin Briggs's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 110

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Gavin Henry, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Gavin Henry's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 111

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Ian Buchan, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Ian Buchan's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 112

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Kerry Fraser, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Kerry Fraser's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 113

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Kevin Buchan, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Kevin Buchan's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 114

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Matt White, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Matt White's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 115

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

resolution:

Whereas Neno Pizza in Lakeside is a family-run establishment, known for great service and an inviting atmosphere; and

Whereas Neno Pizza has been a staple in our community for years, delighting patrons with their traditional pizza oven and authentic recipes, offering a wide selection, including delicious pizza, packed calzones, and savory donair meat; and

Whereas Neno Pizza still uses a traditional stone oven-baked system, which is rare, ensuring a unique and delightful culinary experience;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Neno Pizza for their outstanding commitment to culinary excellence and community engagement, and congratulate them on their ongoing success.

RESOLUTION NO. 116

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Patrick White, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Parick White's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 117

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Rory Fraser, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Rory Fraser's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 118

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Tanner Finney, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Tanner Finney's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 119

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Tim McLeod, a coach of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Parick White's commitment to guide this baseball team from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 120

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

resolution:

Whereas White Sails Bakery & Deli is an award-winning family-owned and -operated and iconic establishment with over 40 years of history, serving both locals and tourists on their way to see the famous Peggy's Cove lighthouse; and

Whereas White Sails Bakery & Deli is renowned for customer favourites such as the best smoked meat sandwiches east of Montreal, thick fresh cut turkey clubhouse, and poutine, which have garnered a loyal following; and

Whereas the mission of White Sails Bakery & Deli is to provide each valued customer with a great experience and a taste of freshness in every bite while always supporting and giving back to the community with their generosity;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly ensure White Sails Bakery & Deli continues to be celebrated and supported for its longstanding contribution to the community, its commitment to quality food and service, and its role as a cherished family-run business.

RESOLUTION NO. 121

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Angus McLeod, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Angus McLeod's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble

beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 122

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Bella Vita Pizzeria offers a variety of delicious dishes, including poutine, donair pizza, and cheeseburgers; and

Whereas this restaurant provides convenient takeaway options, making it suitable for people who have dinner on the go; and

Whereas the establishment creates an enjoyable atmosphere for its visitors;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Bella Vita Pizzeria for its exceptional service, quality food, and overall positive dining experience, and is encouraged to continue its outstanding work and maintain the standards that have earned it such high praise from its customers.

RESOLUTION NO. 123

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Charlie McLeod, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying

leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Charlie McLeod's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 124

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas David Manson, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing David Manson's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 125

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Finley Secord, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Finley Secord's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 126

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Kyle Parsons, a member of the 15U A Prospect Mariners, made history by clinching the 2024 Tier 1 A Provincial Championships, displaying a remarkable journey of dedication, perseverance, and remarkable growth; and

Whereas beyond the team's impressive on-field success, what truly distinguishes the 15U A Prospect Mariners is their exceptional team spirit, unwavering passion for baseball, and the supportive camaraderie and peer recognition they have created by selecting a player each week to assume the role of captain, sharing reflections and celebrating their teammates' efforts and contributions; and

Whereas the Mariners' commitment to the baseball community extends far beyond their own success as players give back by serving as umpires and volunteers, exemplifying leadership and sportsmanship and by hosting the 11U A Provincial Championships, supporting and nurturing the next generation of baseball players.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in

recognizing Kyle Parsons's commitment to baseball and his journey from humble beginnings to provincial champions, showcasing what can be achieved through teamwork, dedication, and a passion for the sport.

RESOLUTION NO. 127

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas the Reverend Cheryl Rafuse is a retired deacon from St. Timothy's Anglican Church in Hatchet Lake and St. Paul's Anglican Church in Terence Bay; and

Whereas in addition to her ministerial duties, Rev. Cheryl is a warm and caring person who goes out of her way to serve the people of her community; and

Whereas as a long-time volunteer with the Prospect Foodshare program, Rev. Cheryl worked tirelessly to provide for those in the community who were experiencing food insecurities, especially during the global COVID-19 pandemic;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Reverend Cheryl Rafuse for her unwavering dedication, service, and compassion towards her community and to thank her for spreading joy wherever she goes with her kind heart and warm smile, always giving freely of her time and talents to everyone in need.