

HANSARD



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Speaker: Hon. Greg Deighan

Published by Order of the Legislature

Fourth Session of the Sixty-Second General Assembly

18 APRIL 2007

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker (Mooney): The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It's one of those rare occasions when there is only one person in the public gallery, so there must be a lot watching on television at home. Of course, Brendon is here from CBC and he covers us fairly well.

I'd like to just take a moment to recognize anyone celebrating a birthday today. I think on average there are probably about 400 people a day celebrating birthdays. In particular, I want to mention Mairead Murphy, who is the daughter of our Provincial Treasurer, who is 14. I know she follows the Legislature and (Indistinct) events closely. So I hope she enjoys her day in the sun.

A couple of Islanders have recently been recognized and promoted or have excelled in some way, I'd like to recognize. First is Charlottetown native Matthew Gregory MacDonald. He is being promoted to a major general position in the Canadian armed forces. Major General MacDonald has also received a new posting and is currently serving as Chief of Defence Intelligence.

Another Islander I'd like to recognize is Andy O'Brien, the son of Michael and Patricia O'Brien. He's featured in *MacLeans Magazine* this week in an article about Sydney Crosby. Andy is credited with being an integral part of Sydney Crosby's development. He's contributed in this way, in that he has worked at strengthening and conditioning of athletes and he currently

works with the Florida Panthers in that regard. Who knows, probably the best hockey player in the world today is partly that way because of an Islander behind him.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say hello to everyone watching on Eastlink Channel 10. I'd especially like to say hello to a great friend of mine and a great advisor down at Prince Edward Home, Mr. Edison Irving, who I know follows those proceedings on a daily basis and has a lot of issues with the government. I know that he's hoping that hopefully the government will change soon enough so that he can start to see some action. I just want to let Edison and all my friends down at the Prince Edward Home know that we're working on that on a daily basis.

While I'm on my feet too, I'd also like to wish all our fishermen all the best. I know that a lot of our lobster fishers are getting ready to head out on the waters fairly soon. We're actually quite fortunate in the Liberal caucus right now to have three fishermen preparing for the lobster season. I'd just like to take this opportunity to wish all fishers all the best in the upcoming season as they prepare.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Winsloe-West Royalty.

Mr. Collins: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We all know this is National Volunteer Week, and I want to take this opportunity to thank Jeff Cook, the recreation director at the Beech Grove Home, for inviting me last evening to what turned out to be a really joyful celebration of volunteer service at Beach Grove Home. His staff was just marvellous there last night, Ellen Blair among those staff members. She really raised the roof last night with her cheerful singing and got everyone off to a great start.

There are about 130 Islanders who volunteer their time at the Beach Grove Home and they really bring the outside indoors to the home, whether it's dog therapy - the pair of beautiful King Charles spaniels that regularly visit residents at the home - whether it's taking care of the canteen activities, or even putting, on three times a year, fish fries, beautiful Island brook trout all done up on the barbecue for the residents.

So those are priceless things that people give, their time, their talent and their energy. I just want to salute them here in the House today, and I'm sure I speak on behalf of members when we say thank you for their great service to their fellow Islanders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Dunn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to welcome our viewing audience to today's proceedings. Also too, the St. Anthony's Royal Canadian Legion in Bloomfield is having a major celebration this weekend. They're celebrating their 60th anniversary of the founding of the legion, which happened to take place in 1947, April 17th, which was yesterday. They're having a

big celebration Sunday night.

As well, the ladies auxiliary are having a 50th anniversary. It's supposed to be a wonderful evening. There are still two charter members left from 60 years ago, Ted Gallant and Camille Pineau, and there are four chartered women who are still alive and well in West Prince. We're looking forward to a wonderful celebration at the Bloomfield Legion. There are a few tickets available. If anybody wants to get them, call the legion home.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Arsenault: *Merci monsieur le Président.*

Moi aussi j'aimerais de souhaiter la bienvenue aux visiteurs qui viennent juste d'arriver ici. Aussi j'aimerais saluer les résidents de la circonscription d'Évangéline-Miscouche ainsi que les téléspectateurs qui sont à l'écoute aujourd'hui.

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would also like to welcome the visitors who have just arrived. I would also like to extend greetings to the residents of the Evangeline-Miscouche riding as well as to the viewers who are watching today.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has mentioned that many people today are obviously celebrating a birthday of sorts. Today is the birthday of Mrs. Rita Poirier from Miscouche. She's actually celebrating her 90th birthday. So my thoughts would be with her for today.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from West Point-Bloomfield.

Ms. Rodgeron: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to welcome anyone that is in the gallery today, but a special hello to the seniors in District 25 West Point-Bloomfield. Especially to Mr. Jim Lidstone who has been in the hospital for some time. Jim is a great guy, good poll chair of mine, and he has been quite sick. I'm hoping he is watching the proceedings today.

When we talk of the spring season starting out, a lot of excitement starting to happen in my district. The Howard School Cove Plant's getting ready to ramp up for another year. I just want to give a special mention to Roger and Lynne Wall, the great effort they put forth there. Last year they employed over 275 people, a payroll of over a million and a half dollars. So I know they're going to have a great season. Just also wish all the fishermen well as they get out to sea and the farmers as they go out on the land.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to welcome everybody to the Legislature today, especially Ronnie Lee, great school board, he represents my area on the school board and he's doing a great job on it.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Spring Park.

Mr. MacAleer: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to

recognize all those listening on the Internet and those who may be watching on Eastlink cable.

This is the week of recognizing volunteers, and indicative of the contribution that volunteers make, I'd just like to point out that the provincial Heart and Stroke Association just received a national award for having the highest per capita giving of any association in Canada. Of course, why I want to note that too, as well, while it involves all Islanders, is that the president of the current Heart and Stroke Association is Wilma Hambly, who happens to be a constituent of mine.

So we're very thankful about the caring attitude of Islanders and applaud them for their caring for one another.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome all the viewers, especially our seniors and the shut-ins. I rise today to really thank the Summerside Western Capitals for a tremendous season of hockey that they've given to all the residents of Prince Edward Island. As I mentioned last week, all the players on the Western Capitals, except one, are Island natives. That's a great tribute to our hockey system in the province. I want to thank Forbie Kennedy, George Roberts and Gabe Keough for doing a tremendous job.

Last night more than 4,300 people gathered to see the Western Capitals play what turned out to be their final game of this season, led by Captain Jordan Knox of the minister of transportation's district. They put on another fine showing.

Just to show the class of this organization, there was some complications with the 50-

50 draw. The original draw was for more than \$12,000. Because there was some complications and all the tickets weren't involved in the first draw, the team donated their half, which was over \$12,000, for a second draw. They gave that to the fans and their appreciation of the great support for the organization. So more than \$25,000 went back to the fans.

While I'm on my feet too, I just want to mention within our Assembly that Canada lost a great Canadian over the weekend. June Callwood passed away. June was a tremendous social activist, writer, just about everything. Her mark on our country will be appreciated for a long time to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from North River-Rice Point.

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the viewers, especially our senior citizens that are watching this. Also the many people who have taken time off their busy schedule to watch Question Period at 2:00, and our many youth that are watching it also.

Also when I'm on my feet, I want to thank all the people that have been phoning me with information to ask this government. I think I really appreciate it. Especially when I was on agriculture yesterday, the phone's been off the hook, with people phoning with new questions for me to ask. I want to thank them very well.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from St.

Eleanors-Summerside.

MacKinnon re Historica Remembrance Summit

Ms. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, it is often said there is no better teacher than experience and I'm a firm believer in that truism.

For Three Oakes instructor, David Chisholm, and eight of his students, their participation in the Historica Remembrance Summit in Ottawa last week was an experience of a lifetime.

The theme of this year's summit was aimed at raising awareness of the sacrifices made by the Canadian armed forces over the years throughout the world.

Before last week, few people had ever heard of William Esty MacKinnon of Enmore and his role at Vimy Ridge. David's students - Kim Flynn, Morgan McNeill, Sarah McQuaid, Jennie Howatt, Joel Young, Chelsea MacIntyre, Bethany MacKay, and Nick Creelman, who dressed in authentic World War I uniform to portray MacKinnon - chose to tell his story.

MacKinnon wasn't a Victoria Cross winner. He was just a young man from Enmore who went off to fight in two world wars. His job at Vimy Ridge was to dig trenches.

For their efforts with this presentation, these students won the national Order of Historica award for this Prince Edward Island veteran.

The students were most grateful to the family of William Esty MacKinnon as they provided the photos, the letters, and other resources for this research. The family was very passionate about having his story told and having him honoured.

The students were presented with medals

and the Order of Historica and had the satisfaction of bringing recognition to an unheralded hero and learning of the sacrifices of those who had gone before them.

I extend sincere congratulations to these Three Oakes students and their instructor, David Chisholm, on a magnificent job well done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from West Point-Bloomfield.

PEI Skills Competition

Ms. Rodgeron: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Island high schools and college students recently competed in the 2007 PEI Skills Competition organized by Skills Canada. Now the winners are preparing to represent their schools at the national Canada Skills Competition to be held in Saskatoon in June.

Skills Canada is a national, non-profit organization that actively promotes careers in skilled trades and technologies to Canadian youth. Since its inception in 1989, it has evolved into a pan-Canadian organization offering skilled trades and technology competitions at the regional, provincial, territorial, national and international levels, as well as other awareness programs for thousands of young Canadians.

The 2007 PEI Skills Competition held recently involved approximately 150 secondary and post-secondary students competing in 28 different categories.

In reviewing the results of the competition, I was more than pleased to see so many of the

top competitors are again from West Prince, attending Westisle High School. Westisle medalists were: Gold - Samantha Keough, Mitch Gallant, Dallas Ellsworth and Curtis Pitre; Silver - Chelsea Millar, Erin Newcombe, Bradford Perry, Marshall Noye, Austin Gaudette, Harper Perry and Jonathan Shea; Bronze: Bronze - Jessica O'Rourke, Kelsey Gallant, Matthew Hardy and Katrina Craig.

In addition, Westisle picked up the provincial banner naming the school the Prince Edward Island Skills 2007 Overall Provincial Champion.

I was also pleased to learn recently that Prince Edward Island will be hosting the 2009 National Skills Competition in Charlottetown from May 20th to 23rd. There will be a wonderful opportunity to show the nation just how great we are.

All these successes say great things about how our government is developing and supporting our educational system and will continue to do so in the future.

I congratulate all the winners and extend sincere thanks to the instructors for a job well done and offer best wishes to those who are heading off to the national competitions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from North River-Rice Point.

PEI Mutual rebates

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand in the House today with great pleasure to recognize the great work that PEI Mutual Fire Insurance have done. This

is the year that they're going to be able to give back 20%. They're going to give back 10% of your premium in a cheque and another 10% when you sign up for a new one. This is an organization, it's probably one of the best years they've had, and that means that there's been less fires or less claims. What have they done? They've turned it back to the farming community at 20%. They have 29,000 policy holders here in the province.

I just want to recognize some of the people there at the Prince Edward Island Mutual Fire Insurance Company. They are Claude Dorgan from Tignish, Jim Doyle, Allison Johnson, Stewart MacRae, Brian MacKinley - my brother - Gordon Matheson from Montague area, Gordon Vessey - another cousin of mine from York - Brian Annear from Montague. Officers are Percy Affleck as president, Gordon Vessey as vice-president, general manager - a lot of credit has got to go to him - Terry Shea, legal counsel is Blair Campbell of Summerside and treasurer is Ruby Smith.

They deserve a lot of credit in a time when everything is going up and government has been mismanaging money. This is an Island company, run and owned by Islanders, that has made a tremendous difference in what farmers are paying and also policy holders (Indistinct).

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Nitrate groundwater contamination

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

My first question today is for the Premier. Like many other Islanders, I'm highly concerned about the recent report that shows nitrate levels in our water supply are far too high and they are rising. This is an issue of fundamental importance to the future of our great province and I am dismayed by the reaction of this government.

For years now this administration has known the dangers of nitrate contamination yet they have failed to adequately warn Islanders and equally, they have failed to keep Islanders informed of the implications. Why was this important report first released in China instead of being provided directly to the people of Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Ballem: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the Leader of the Opposition is getting his facts about informing Islanders.

I think four years ago we released a state of the environment report. There'll be another one coming out in the next six months. Every year we release water quality statistics. Every year we make comments and talk about nitrates. The department of agriculture has been working with farmers on nutrient management. The federal government has been working on research projects. I know that the opposition is against taking any steps. The Liberal Party has gone on record - they were against buffer zone legislation, they were against three year rotation. It's nice to be able to sit over there. They're going to stay over there with that attitude.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It shows the leadership of the current government when the Premier won't get up and they send up the minister of environment to make false accusations and just to try and put in scare tactics that we all know and Islanders know are not true. But unfortunately for this government, that's what they chose to do.

I know that the Premier and his chorus of Conservatives, like the minister of environment, will accuse me of being against everything. They will accuse me of being against chemical fertilizer companies, and any other sector that they can think of. It's the politics of division and it's getting tiresome. I know these accusations will be made and they will get us nowhere.

We have an extremely serious issue on our hands and the solution will require a fully informed public. Will the Premier please describe to Islanders the general trend of nitrates since his party was first elected?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the House and the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we do take this matter very seriously.

It's for that reason that we have undertaken many initiatives in recent years in regard to alleviating or reducing the impact of chemical fertilizers as well as cases where contaminants are getting into our water systems from other sources. It's not just chemical fertilizers which have an impact here.

But let me remind the Leader of the Opposition that it was this government that has brought in crop rotation legislation, it was this government that brought in buffer

zone legislation, it's been this government that has greatly accelerated and brought about environmental farm plans wherein farmers across PEI are involved in management of the issues that could contribute to nitrate levels in our soils.

Besides that, we, the taxpayers, subsidize the testing of water on an ongoing basis from Islanders from one end of the province to the other. Certainly in every case people are advised of their nitrate levels if that's an issue. It's up to people to keep an eye on that but, certainly, if there's a problem, people are advised of that. If there's followup required, the tests, I believe, followup in many cases is provided by government so that a person can identify the source of the contamination and do something about it.

We are initiating a task force which will be taking further steps besides those.

An Hon. Member: Another study (Indistinct).

Premier Binns: It's not a study, Mr. Speaker.

It will initiate further steps to reduce the impact of nitrates in our waters. It is a serious concern which we are aware of. I, on many occasions, have talked to various parties including the agricultural community about the concern of nitrates rising in our groundwater, and it's because of that kind of action that we are taking steps on an ongoing basis.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think those are some hollow statements by the Premier. Because if you brought in

regulations and brought in measures to help reduce nitrate levels, why have they been increasing since you've come to power? A former minister of yours, Don MacKinnon, has done a report and I'll quote from one statement in one of his reports, and this goes back to 1998: In PEI there is evidence to suggest the nitrate levels are continuing to rise in both groundwater and fresh surface water fed by groundwater. While the biggest impact of nitrate contamination has been experienced by private wells, nitrate problems have already adversely impacted municipal water supplies in some areas of the province.

That goes all the way back to 1998. Even with that it was easy to tell yesterday that this government will not take this issue seriously. The minister of the environment said: Regulation is not always effective or practical. In other words, what the Premier believes is a plan is not working. The minister of agriculture said: As a government, we recognize that regulation is not the answer to this problem.

I want to know, in light of what the Premier just answered, does he agree with his ministers?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would lead Islanders to believe that nitrate levels all of a sudden just happen in the water system in groundwater in PEI.

This takes a lot of years to develop. The nitrates, other things that are added to soils, take years and years and years. It may only move down through the water table or through the ground maybe a foot or two a year. Many of the wells in PEI are down 40 feet, 50 feet, 100 feet. It takes a long time for those nitrates to work down. Now what happens is if the nitrates are not fully utilized by the plant because of an unusual

growing year, then that nitrate contamination can be left over, if you like, for another year. The hope is that the next crop will pick that up but, of course, if you get another dry year, the plant doesn't grow adequately, then it causes some problems.

So there's been a growing awareness, understanding, of this issue over time. Farmers, I believe, understand it better, the Island community understands it better, and I urge the Opposition to try to understand some of the issues here. We have been working with the agricultural community to implement measures that ensure that nitrates are taken up by the plants, either in the growing season by a fall crop, cover crop that's put on the land - it's one of the reasons why we've been encouraging the use of cover crops in the fall. Not just to protect from erosion, but to use up the excess nitrogen that might not have been used during the growing season by the potato crop or the corn crop or whatever else it was.

To grandstand this issue is not the answer. The answer is to continue to work with the farming community, with the processors, with communities in this regard. It's for that reason that we have initiated the whole watershed development plan. We're encouraging Islanders to become involved in working together to look at their watershed, what they can do to ensure that their area is enhanced. We've been working through the Environmental Advisory Council in that regard. We're encouraging Islanders to be involved in the process. Not to hit the panic button, because these issues didn't develop overnight and they're not going to be fixed overnight, but we have a responsibility to continue working on them. So we'll continue with measures that will hopefully reduce the impact of nitrogen and ensure groundwater is good on PEI for many years to come.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I find it shameful that the Premier would talk about grandstanding when we're talking about the health of Islanders and the long-term sustainability of our province as a whole. Unfortunately for Islanders, this Premier has been in power for 11 years and we've only seen rising rates in nitrate levels since this Premier has come to power.

It's interesting that he talks about watershed planning and management recommendations. In early March the following statement was made in the community-based watershed planning and management recommendations, and I quote: The government must be prepared to enforce any regulations that emerge from this process. Watered-down regulations and lack of enforcement in the past and present suggest that the current government is unwilling to make some of the tough decisions that would benefit the Island in the long term.

I believe it is time that we started thinking of our Island in terms of the long term. If I ever heard a clear description of this government, that is definitely it: too concerned about the short term. You will not make the long-term tough decisions because your agenda is short term and political. Why, Mr. Premier, is your administration failing to follow the recommendations of experts?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, again, I think the evidence is quite the opposite.

We have been proactive in this area. We have taken a lot of steps. As I recall under their government in the past, there were

really no measures being taken to address this issue. Nitrates just didn't start in our water system in the last 10 years. They've been building up for 20, 25 years ago. We started to be aware that this would be a future issue. That's why we've undertaken things like mandatory crop rotation. That's why we have buffer zone legislation. It's why, quite frankly, we've taken cattle out of streams, that kind of thing. It's why we follow up on every water test where there's a problem to ensure that we understand where that problem came from. Sometimes it didn't come from chemical fertilizer. It might come from a manure pile that's located too close to a well that's not properly installed, and so you get contamination that runs into that. That doesn't necessarily affect only one well. It might affect a whole bunch of wells in the area and quite often you can identify those problems.

So government is working on these issues. We'll continue to work on them. The watershed management initiative is an example of that. We're not waiting. We're proactive in this area, and the task force will only serve to expedite and make sure that we respond even quicker to the identified issues.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I have to remind the Premier he's been in power now for an awfully long 11 years. Nitrate levels have been rising ever since he's come to power. He talks about measures that he's brought in. His measures have not worked and the health concerns that arise from this are very serious.

Another insight from the document I just quoted - I have another one now - and I

quote again from the document: One of our main concerns with this process, i.e., the public consultation meetings, is that the provincial government appears to be absconding from its role in the overall protection of our watershed while superficially at least giving the appearance that they are consulting the public about what needs to be done.

Those are serious allegations. I believe what the minister of environment and what the minister of agriculture attempted to describe yesterday is nothing more than what this group suggested, absconding from its role in the protection of our watershed. These are serious accusations. My question: Why isn't this government taking the expert concerns more seriously?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Ballem: Mr. Speaker, in the Leader of the Opposition's preamble he quoted from a document.

I'm guessing it's presentations that were made to the public hearings that the Environmental Advisory Council held. I think it's a little frustrating when time after time we hear of the opposition, the Liberal Party, saying you need to get out and consult with Islanders, you need to find out what Islanders want to have. So what we've done in response to dealing with issues and watersheds, we've asked the Environmental Advisory Council, which in the past has done reports on C & D sites and pesticide use, to go out and have hearings and hear what the public have to say.

We'll be tabling that report next week when it's finally completed, but the idea that let's solve this problem today with a regulation is not the answer. We've been studying nitrates in this province for over 20 years, and have they been rising? Yes, they have.

That's why there's been issues taken in dealing with the department of agriculture on nutrient management. How can we work with the producers and make sure that we're putting the proper amount of nutrients on the soil and not just putting extras on? But to go in and try to have a regulated solution very seldom works.

Why not work with the watershed groups? Why not work with the communities and have them part of the process? That's why the task force is being set up. I know that some people think a quick fix is going to do it, but again, getting back to the idea of being confused and frustrated, time after time you're over-regulating us, you've got regulations for everything now, and now they want another regulation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The minister of environment does have a lot of hot air but he was partially right. The report that I was quoting from comes from a submission to the Environmental Advisory Board and it comes from the associate professor of biology at UPEI; the director of the regional programs, Atlantic Canada, of the Atlantic Salmon Federation; another associate professor of biology at the University of Prince Edward Island; and a Canada research chair on watershed integrity at the University of Prince Edward Island.

So I know that it's fine for the minister to dismiss what I'm saying, but these are experts in the field and they're quite concerned with the strategy that you're now taking. I want to go back to the Premier. High levels of nitrates have been connected

to many different health problems and this is cause for great worry and great concern. We are dependent on our groundwater and the trends do not speak well for the future of our water supply.

Why has this government confined itself to a consultation process that zeros in on potato processors and fertilizer companies? This is a narrow, sectoral issue. This issue affects every single Islander. Why isn't this also being treated as a public health issue?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Ballem: Mr. Speaker, I think if the opposition had actually listened to the comments that I made yesterday and the minister of agriculture had said is that it is not going to be targeted at one area.

It is going to be a task force and looking at it on a community basis. You can't say that the solution to deal with the issue in Wilmot watershed is the same as that you would have in the Souris River watershed.

We've got results all over this province where watershed groups have come together, the community has come together, the landowners, the farmers, the communities, the tourist operators. They are the ones who are going to come up with the solutions.

I mean, it's interesting that the Leader of the Opposition picked out fertilizer companies and potato processors. It sounds like some of his corporate friends have called up and said: Don't let them pick on us. This has to be a response from everyone. When the contract that potato farmers have says thou shalt produce that potato that requires significantly more nitrogen than a seed potato requires, then they have a responsibility to be part of the solution. Not the whole solution, part of the solution. I

know that some of the members in the opposition can be bought and taken on trips. I'm hoping they're all not.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This is an issue that we're discussing today that I know the minister of health would probably be well aware is a major health issue in this province. It is about the future of this province. For this minister of the environment to be making such ridiculous comments is really a testament to this Premier's government and the leadership under his government and the quality of Cabinet ministers that he happens to choose. Because it's really a serious issue, and for this minister to be going down that road is quite unfortunate.

This government has a single goal. They want to politically manage this issue in a way that will keep political damage away from them. This is not a political issue. This is a health issue, and if we continue on our current course it will not be resolved. Instead of this narrow, politically managed approach, I believe we need a full Royal Commission on groundwater issues here on Prince Edward Island.

I will not turn a blind eye to the potential problems that lie in wait just to avoid the political accusations of this administration. You have the capacity to do this, Mr. Premier. You have the resources to begin a full Royal Commission right now. Take it out of the political field and leave it with non-partisan experts who can truly tell us the way we need to proceed in the future. Will you do that? You can be assured of my full support, and I believe you will also enjoy the full support of Islanders if you take the politics out of this serious issue and

begin a full Royal Commission into these serious issues.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, he says it's not a political issue and yet his whole remarks are intended to suggest that somehow our government created nitrates in the water on PEI.

I've been involved in a nitrate study going back probably 20, 25 years on PEI, the policies developed by his government in terms of his party, at least in terms of support for changing agriculture in our province. So he says he doesn't want it to be a political issue yet he makes it a political issue.

We will deal with this matter as we indicated. The idea of a Royal Commission is interesting. I'm going to think about that one a little bit. Partly what a Royal Commission would do would go out and determine whether there's a problem or not. We already know there's a problem. That is well established. Nitrate levels have been rising in our waters and what we have to do is turn that around. Royal Commissions usually investigate the past. We've got lots of investigation. We've got thousands and thousands and thousands of water samples across PEI, most of which do not show alarming rates of nitrates, but there are some wells and, in particular, in some areas where this is obviously a bigger concern.

What we have to look at is the future and Royal Commissions don't necessarily address the future. We have to find better solutions to this problem. That's what the task force will do, that's what the watershed management groups will do, and we'll consider that possibility.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

If the Premier does want to take the politics out of this and does want to make sure that we're going to ensure that future Islanders have access to clean groundwater here in the Province of Prince Edward Island, that our children can be healthy, that our seniors can be healthy, that our farmers can make a living in this province by practising farm practices that they want to practise to maintain the land that for generations farmers have been practising on here in Prince Edward Island, this Premier will do the right thing.

Terms of reference are decided by the government. They can decide what happens with the Royal Commission and make sure that the consultation process does have results. It will take the politics out of this and make sure that Islanders can have access to clean water for years and years and years to come. Will the Premier please call a Royal Commission into this serious issue?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Mr. Speaker, we're not waiting for a Royal Commission to take action.

We've been taking action on this issue, as I've indicated. You know, crop rotation legislation, buffer zone legislation, environmental farm plans, fencing cattle out of streams. All these things didn't happen because we weren't doing anything. We have taken action, and quite often his party has been diametrically opposed to these initiatives. You know: You're picking on the agricultural industry. We heard it yesterday. We're proactive in these areas and yet they want to politicize it.

We will continue to take action in this important area, and I can assure Islanders

that we welcome their suggestions as to courses of action to take. I talked to a gentleman last night for some time about this issue. He's a farmer himself. He suggested that we should be going to four-year crop rotations. That's already being practised by some farmers. We went from no crop rotation legislation to three-year crop rotation. Now there is talk about four. That's the kind of suggestion that merits some consideration, but we better understand the consequences of it. We're prepared to look at all suggestions that come forward. I invite people to call me with their ideas.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Tourism ads in magazines

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First question for the Minister of Tourism. Can the minister state for the House today Atlantic magazines where PEI is being targeted for tourism?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I will take that question as notice and bring back the information.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to touch base with the minister just to see if he knew what magazines or print articles are being developed through his department. I have, through someone telling me, picked up the new 2007 travel edition of *Saltscapes*. I brought up *Saltscapes* last year and I thought maybe the

minister would remember *Harrowsmith* and remember *Saltscapes* being brought up in last year's line of questioning in regards to tourism marketing.

Now it's interesting. I open it up and there is advertising for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. I look at the insert for a mail-in visitor's guide. Here is Nova Scotia's. Where do you mail it to? Halifax, Nova Scotia, postage paid. New Brunswick mail-in, where do I send it to? Campbellton, New Brunswick, postage paid. Insert for Prince Edward Island tourism, PEI tourism, where do I send it to? Calais, Maine. Calais, Maine, and no postage paid. You tell me, Mr. Minister. This is an Atlantic Canadian magazine. Why are we sending our inserts to Calais, Maine, USA?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

There are a number of editions of that particular magazine that go into the United States. It's more cost effective to have the postage sent to Calais, Maine, and then forwarded on to our department. We have a post office box there.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Mr. Speaker, this magazine says: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Maine.

Maine is one, but all the other provinces send it to their own province. Why is PEI - now last year, interesting, Mr. Minister, I'm doing my research here - last year our inserts had all the same yet PEI was sending it to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

So why are we sending it to Calais, Maine, USA, Mr. Minister? You have to justify on this floor of this Legislature why you're sending to the American States, Mr. Minister. Why?

Mr. R. Brown: Why are you against Charlottetown?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think I explained that there's a number of copies that do go to Maine, and in those copies we have a post office box in Maine that the American visitors can respond to with their own postage. Then from that post office box they're forwarded to Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Funding for Confederation Centre

Mr. Arsenault: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

There was mention in the Budget about increased funding for the Confederation Centre of the Arts. Can the minister provide some detail on what's going to take place with this announcement?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

Mr. MacFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise to say that our government supports the Confederation Centre. There was \$250,000 mentioned in the Budget. The Confederation Centre approached our government in regards to accessing funding in order to do some

capital upgrades with the centre and we were able to accommodate their request.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Arsenault: Just one supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

The Confederation Centre is a very important asset to the community and the economy and so I'm very pleased to hear that the funding has been increased. What sort of things will be covered with this additional funding?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

Mr. MacFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the Confederation Centre is very valuable to the economy of the province and I guess also to the City of Charlottetown.

They generate about \$33 million to the economy and, as a government, we felt that we were obliged to assist them in whatever manner we can. We do give a large grant to the Confederation Centre for their operating costs, but we also know that in the Confederation Centre they need at times to have an upgrade to their facility. In regards to the productions that they put on, they're going to increase their lighting and change it, and they're also going to improve their sound systems which should be a benefit to their performances that they put on to the general public and to the tourists.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Winsloe-West Royalty.

Ceridian company

Mr. Collins: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of

Development and Technology. In recent years, much to the satisfaction of many Islanders, we've been experiencing a real growing diversification of our Island economy, and it was just last winter past that we had an announcement that Ceridian, a global human resources firm, has decided to set up shop here in our island. I would like to know if the minister can tell us just how this newest member of our Island corporate community is faring these days. Could he have a brief update on that?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to update the member.

Ceridian has set up a temporary location in the Atlantic Technology Centre. They've started hiring. They anticipate to be up to between 40 and 50 people by the end of the year and ramp up to 100 within the next year, and they're presently now picking a site for their new office.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Winsloe-West Royalty.

Mr. Collins: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

On that last point that the minister mentioned about a new office, I know the Atlantic Technology Centre is proving to be a great sort of temporary home for a number of new technology businesses on Prince Edward Island before they branch out on their own. But do we know anything more about any real sort of permanent location for Ceridian in the Charlottetown area?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Development and Technology.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, the company has narrowed their locations down to a few locations in the downtown location of

Charlottetown, and certainly our government supports that because we believe in supporting all communities all across PEI.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Tourism ads in magazines (further)

Ms. Bertram: Let's take the words of the minister of development, Mr. Speaker.

We support communities. We support jobs on Prince Edward Island. Why are we mailing visitor guides to Calais, Maine, Mr. Minister of Tourism? How can you justify it? Even if I take the mail - which I will table later on during Question Period - the others even when you have to indicate your province, they put: state/province, zip code, postal code. Prince Edward Island just puts: state, zip. We don't even have a Canadian-based advertising campaign. This is for Atlantic region and Maine as well, but all the other two provinces are putting the mail to their own province. Why the USA? Why aren't you supporting jobs here in the Province of Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We're not in the practice of following the lead necessarily always of the other Atlantic provinces. We've been a leader in tourism in this province. We are a premiere destination. We've won extensive awards as being a premiere destination and we'll continue to work along that vein. This is a good use, this is a practical idea that maximizes our efficiency. We don't have to spend additional funds on postage and we can use that money to increase our advertising

exposure.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: That's a poor answer, Mr. Speaker, a very poor answer, but I'll go even further.

Since we're not getting any answers in regards to the mailing, let's look at the 2007 marketing launch for PEI tourism. Within it, it talks about what kind of marketing they're doing. They quote on one of the pages where they should have people in the advertisement, people. Let's look at the advertisement in the *Saltscapes* magazine. Picture of a lighthouse. Again, like I quoted last year, very difficult to read, very small font, people - it doesn't catch their eye. What does it say?: At meals, people would count their blessings instead of calories. But where is the person? Where is the table? Where is the food? Where is the juicy lobster? There's nothing. It's just a visual of PEI.

Why aren't we marketing Prince Edward Island? Why aren't we reaching out and getting true marketing here on the Province of Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm extremely disappointed. That's the first time I've ever heard the beautiful scenery of Prince Edward Island referred to as nothing.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go back to the minister because I want some answers here.

I want answers because this is the same marketing slogan from last year's campaign. It's not even new. It's not even part of the 2007 marketing campaign. So why, Mr. Minister, are you a year behind with your marketing for this *Saltscapes* magazine for 2007?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not exactly sure when that particular ad was placed in that particular magazine. I'll be prepared to bring forward that information during Budget estimates. However, I will say that sometimes you have to pre-book your places in magazines, especially quarterly magazines that have a pre-print period. There is a time that you introduce your new advertising, and if the requirement is before that period, which I'm not particularly sure of, then you use the material that you have current.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: The minister is very vague in his answers, Mr. Speaker.

It's pretty sad that this government provided enabling legislation to the municipalities so that now they have to go out and promote themselves. Because you're doing such an inadequate job, Mr., Minister, in your department as minister and the leadership that you're providing for marketing here on Prince Edward Island.

Funding for Aerosmith concert

So now I'd like to go to my next question. Why are you giving \$350,000 to the marketer of Aerosmith concert, Mr. Minister, with no strings attached to that \$350,000? Could you please answer that?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This government has been extremely forthright and visionary in bringing forward great events to Prince Edward Island and in striving hard to promote tourism in PEI. The opposition over there have been criticizing for years our initiatives. Now we bring forward a world-class act and they criticize that. We bring forward world-class golf players and they criticize that. We bring forward two US carriers into the province, the only one of two Atlantic Canadian airports that have two US carriers coming here daily throughout the summer, and they criticize that. We bring forward Westjet, they criticize that. Air Canada increases its delivery into PEI and they criticize that.

They're always about criticizing. We're building the tourism industry of PEI. We're building for the future, and all we get from them is negativity and criticism.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Mr. Speaker, Islanders want accountability from this government and this government is not showing accountability.

Why was it that back in February that you were quoted that you were going to perhaps give \$100,000 to the Aerosmith concert? Now it's up to \$350,000. Back then you said it could be perhaps put towards security, but yet you're giving \$350,000 to the promoter with no strings attached. Then on the news this week, he also states that there's going to be 25,000 people come to it, and 20,000 of those out of province. He's expecting them to pay \$400 - this is why he's justifying this \$350,000 - that these people coming from

out of province, the visitors, would be spending \$400 a piece. Why is it then that I called the 1-800 tourism line? I called for July 21st. Why are things booked up and why have they said it's been booked up for a month?

The Aerosmith website doesn't even have the dates for the concert in Charlottetown. So where are they going to stay? Plus, why didn't you even look at the fall season or maybe August or 1st of July, Mr. Minister? Answer that, please.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I suppose the hon. member didn't recognize it but she answered her own question. The answer why things are booked up is because Aerosmith is playing, and that's the power of this event. It's really good that the opposition are understanding a little bit the power of this event. Even the rumours, the hoteliers -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Speaker: Hon. member.

The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Mr. Speaker, we got to get more credibility into this Legislature.

A month ago it was booked, a month ago. This wasn't confirmed until about a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Minister. And you answer the question. You answer that question. Where are people going to stay? I worked in tourism. I know that the 21st of July to the 1st of August is peak season. Why wouldn't you have the promoter go out and looked for maybe the 1st of July, those first two weeks, or maybe into the shoulder season into

September season? Please answer that, Mr. Minister?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will answer the question if they're going to allow me. Last time I sat down because there was so much racket and they wanted to interrupt.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. P. Brown: But if you want me to answer the question, I will.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Hon. members.

Mr. P. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The anticipation of this particular event - and you can contact the hoteliers. At the rumour that this event was going to happen their phones started to ring, and our phone -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. P. Brown: Our phone over at the department of tourism is ringing off the hook based on even without ticket availability yet. But the tickets will be available on the 21st or the 28th of this month.

I just want to say, this is a major event and that's why we're supporting it. This world tour of this band, which is in the top five international travelling bands, is playing in São Paulo, Brazil, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Mexico City, Las Vegas, Nevada, Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, Bangalore, India, Denmark, Sweden, Frankfurt, Germany, Venice, Italy, Paris, France, Belgium, London, England, Dublin, Ireland, another time in Germany, the Netherlands, Latvia,

Estonia, Finland, St. Petersburg, Russia, Moscow, Russia, and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: I'll go on to someone else, but the reality is that the concert before that is in Sarnia, Ontario, and on the website for Aerosmith their dates are announced, tickets are on sale. So we are behind schedule here on Prince Edward Island. I do my homework.

Question on the Attorney General

Anyway, my final question will go to the Premier. Last evening we concluded in the resolution in regards to continuing the support for the Court Challenges Program. I'm asking the Premier today to stand in this Legislature. He can stand and support his Attorney General here in the Province of Prince Edward Island. I'm asking the Premier for this answer, because this minister stood up in this Legislature and talked about how we shouldn't be continuing to support the Court Challenges Program.

I would like to bring attention to the Hansard from the 10th of April, and I would like to quote. This is the Attorney General:

"If I want to support the federal government against an attack by some group who's arguing some issue, should I not get funding too. How sensible is it that the government would fund people who want to argue against it?"

"I mean, think about it. If we decide as a legislative body here that we want to pass a certain law, a certain act, a certain bill, the Court Challenges Program funded only

those who wanted to attack the program. So here we would be as a government funding those who want to challenge us. Now that doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me that you would have a Court Challenges Program."

This is the Attorney General of Prince Edward Island making these statements.

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Ms. Bertram: I am looking for the Premier to stand in this Legislature and justify why this member of your Cabinet should continue in that portfolio when, in fact, we have a Human Rights Commission here in the Province of Prince Edward Island defending human rights, defending the charter of rights here in the Province of Prince Edward Island and in Canada.

You stand, Mr. Premier, in this House and justify why the Attorney General should continue in her portfolio. Not the attorney, you, Mr. Premier, you, you, Mr. Premier, because she is a member of your Cabinet. Please show leadership.

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Attorney General.

Ms. Dover: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It seems to me that if the hon. member is going to quote me to the extent that she did that it's only right and fair that I should have a chance to respond.

It does seem to me - and I quoted from an article, even though the hon. member said she didn't know where I got my information, and even though I had told her it was from the Fraser Forum written by a gentleman called Ian Brody - but the point of the matter is that we do have the Human Rights

Commission. We do have an avenue for people to go to when they need to challenge the courts.

I also said that the Court Challenges Program when it was first initiated did some good things. No question about that. But the problem was the typical one that the former Liberal administration in Ottawa found themselves getting into. They didn't control the dollars. They gave them out, they forgot where they went and they forgot to supervise them, and that's what happened with the Court Challenges Program.

No one said that the Court Challenges Program wasn't a good idea initially. My point was that the Court Challenges Program evolved into something that I think the federal government was right to bring an end to because it did do a number of things that took away so much from the program as it was initially envisioned.

Speaker: End of Question Period.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

A little bit later this afternoon we will be joined in the public gallery by some special guests. These are members of Team PEI who recently returned from the Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse, members who returned with four medals. I, along with the minister of sport, will be honouring the medal winners, their families, coaches, and managers as well as mission staff at a reception this evening.

The Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs took time on the opening day of this session to congratulate Team PEI on their performance in Whitehorse and I want to

take a moment to pay special tribute to the athletes and their coaches as well as the managers.

Congratulations goes to Patrick Knox from Cornwall who won a gold medal in judo in Whitehorse. Patrick also recently won both gold and bronze at the 2007 Canadian junior wrestling championships held at Charlottetown, and he will be competing in the international judo competition in Bremen, Germany.

Alicia Wilbert of Charlottetown took home a bronze medal in judo and recently won gold at Eastern Canadian and Atlantic championships, and gold at the senior nationals in Winnipeg. Alicia also earned a bronze medal at the 2003 Canada Games, which makes her one of two Islanders to win medals at two Canada Games.

Congratulations also to Carrie Callahan of Summerside who also received a bronze medal in judo, coaches Gordie Foster and Frankie Gallison, and team manager John Wilbert.

In week two our men's curling team were the team to beat. They did come home with a bronze, just after winning second place at the Canadian Junior Championships. Skip Brett Gallant, third Adam Casey, second Anson Carmody and lead Alex MacFadyen, along with their coach Katie Gallant and team manager Gordon MacFadyen, have given our province a lot to cheer about this winter.

The Canada Games, whether they are held across the country, in places like Whitehorse, or in our own backyard as planned for 2009, are only as successful as the people who work to make them happen, and for the most part those people are volunteering their time, their talents as well as their skills to guide our youth towards the games and medal performances.

Now, it is National Volunteer Week, and I want to thank everyone who volunteers in our province to help advance these games and work with our athletes to compete in both summer and winter games. Of course, I remind everyone that we'll be hosting the 2009 summer games here on Prince Edward Island, and of course our host committee is actively working in that regard. Again, congratulations to our athletes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our athletes, in particular our medal winners, but also every athlete who had the privilege and the opportunity to participate in the Canada Games.

It's really when you reach the pinnacle of your athletic career you get to go to the Canada Games here on a national level. Of course after that there's the Olympic level, but in terms of provincially, being able to attend the Canada Games is indeed quite an accomplishment. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our athletes, along with the coaches and the administrators and all the volunteers that go in to helping the team travel as far as they did. All the training that goes into that.

Also, I'd like to mention Prince Edward Island is hosting the 2009 Summer Games. I know that there's an excitement building out there right now. And I'd like to wish the host committee and Joseph Spriet all the best in their work. I know it'll be a lot of work and we have to make sure that the government is behind them 100% because this is an opportunity for Prince Edward Island to really showcase itself to the rest of

the country.

I truly believe that we are special within the Confederation and I know that the host committee will do a great job of making sure that we put on tremendous games for all of Canada.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

Mr. MacFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is National Volunteer Week and often in this House we have the privilege of thanking and recognizing volunteers throughout our province. Today I want to make special mention of the many men and women throughout our province who volunteer in the sport fields, on the ice, on the mat and behind the scenes.

At the annual Sports PEI Award Banquet this evening the sports community will have the opportunity to honour their own. Without the involvement of volunteers and sponsors we would not be able to celebrate this success, and I would like to personally thank the many volunteers, businesses, sport facility owners and operators for their ongoing support in our province.

Government continues to develop a very strong sport program, whether it's through community sport, provincial and elite level participation, or the hosting of major sporting events. I am pleased that an additional \$55,000 was allocated in our budget this year to help implement the recommendations in our Physical Activity Strategy, and to enable our province to take an active role in the Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Bilateral which the Public Health Agency of Canada is proposing.

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs is proud to be a contributing partner in the support of sporting organizations through programs such as the Federal/Provincial Sport Bilateral Program. This program has been very successful in providing leadership development opportunities to the sport community through such initiatives as the Provincial Sport Executive Directors program.

I am sure you are aware that hosting major events contributes to both economic and sporting opportunities in our Island municipalities. With the additional \$100,000 we set aside in our recent provincial budget, the Sport and Recreation Division of my department will be able to work with community and provincial sports organizations to bring more major sporting events to our province.

As we have seen this winter, Islanders continue to excel in a variety of sport competitions both at home and on the national and international stage. We look forward to continuing to work with volunteers, with sporting organizations, and with municipal and federal governments to enhance opportunities for athletes, and to promote health and wellness for all Islanders.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd just like to respond to the minister in recognition of Volunteer Week. Certainly in Prince Edward Island we can pride ourselves in our volunteers. I don't where we would be without them because they do spend so many hours in the community, as

the minister stated in regards to sporting activities, whether they be in the community, in the schools, coaches, trainers, parents, and many of those overlap, parents, in terms of taking on those positions.

Youth, too, it's always nice to see the youth that perhaps were involved in sports at a younger age and then come back to volunteer within their community and show a leadership role, whether it be in soccer or hockey, coaching the younger people in their community.

I always think that shows - it's modelling, and they are a positive role model to the younger citizens of their community. That is very appreciated along with in schools, since we're also recognizing all volunteers - on Prince Edward Island in schools there's so many people through Project Love or other people that come in to help, perhaps with the breakfast programs, or perhaps with the healthy snacks.

Many volunteers come in through our church organizations, church groups, many people and other community organizations.

So many of these people in our communities - again I use the word overlap - they are involved in so many organizations that they do spend so much time in so many capacities. I certainly would like to reiterate the minister and just celebrate our volunteers here on the Province of Prince Edward Island, and thank them for all their hard work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Social Services and Seniors.

Mr. Gillan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Being volunteer week, I also would like to continue on that theme. Canada celebrates

National Volunteer Week from April 15th to the 21st, and I would like to encourage all Islanders to join me in showing appreciation to the many dedicated volunteers across our province.

National Volunteer Week was first proclaimed in 1943 as a way to recognize the important contribution Canadian women were making to the war effort on the home front. Since then, this week has expanded to celebrate the special effort of all volunteers and to take notice of the contributions they make to society.

Volunteers are goodwill ambassadors in the Island's health care system. Volunteer Week is an opportunity to thank the many dedicated volunteers in our many health facilities who give countless hours of service to others. It is also an opportunity to learn more about volunteering and to promote the rewards experienced through volunteering in the Island community.

For example, this evening the Volunteer Services office, located at Prince County, is hosting a Just Like the Oscars theme party to honour volunteers from Prince County Hospital, Summerset and Wedgewood Manors, Stewart Memorial Hospital, Child and Family Services, Addictions Services, Home Care, Public Health and other health services for their precious gifts of time and talent.

Prince County Hospital had approximately 300 volunteers who contributed 15,000 hours of volunteer service during the past year. Summerset and Wedgewood Manors and Stewart Memorial Hospital have a combined 225 volunteers who assist regularly.

Volunteers are ready to share their time and skills with those in need. Whether it's playing music and singing for long term care residents and patients, or offering support to

a family member, volunteers provide a valuable service.

Please join me in acknowledging and celebrating the many volunteers on PEI during National Volunteer Week.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I neglected to mention the health community in my previous remarks, and since the hon. minister of health is celebrating volunteers in his capacity as health minister, I would just like to share a little bit as well.

Certainly those volunteers through the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Prince County, I'd like to thank Jill Richardson for all her hard work through the volunteer services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and all those volunteers through the Prince County Hospital and the QEH that work tirelessly and give of their time, whether it be at the front desk, delivering flowers, reading to patients, or those, perhaps, who are working in the cancer treatment centre, sitting down with the family that perhaps has a loved one that's going through a traumatic time.

As well, the hospice of Prince Edward Island, the IODE, the Women's Institute who work tirelessly to fundraise for activities. I know they had Spring in the Air a couple of weeks ago, who work toward health initiatives for health services in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Also, volunteers who work through Tremploy, and outreach programs in the province, along with our seniors' homes. Like the minister said, many groups go into

the seniors' home and sing, maybe it's the clergy, too, or church groups that go in as well, and maybe have church services for the shut-ins in the seniors' homes.

So to all of those, we thank them as well. On behalf of all Islanders, please keep up the great work.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Mr. P. Brown: Mr. Speaker, by Leave of the House, I beg leave to table the list of dates for the international touring act that's coming to Prince Edward Island in the coming summer and I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I quoted magazine inserts in my line of questioning. By Leave of the House, I beg leave to table magazine inserts from Prince Edward Island Tourism, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the insert from New Brunswick Tourism, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and the Nova Scotia insert, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square, all taken from the east coast magazine *Saltscapes*, and I move that the said

documents be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that the 2nd Order of the Day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 2, Consideration of the Estimates in Committee.

Speaker: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Chair (Dunn): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to further consider the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Ms. Shea: Permission to bring the deputy on, please.

Chair: Permission to bring the deputy on?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Granted. We're on page 159.

Design. "Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, travel and services to maintain small bridges." Administration: 6,700. Equipment: 1,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 4,200. Professional and Contract Services: 22,200. Salaries: 385,100. Travel and Training: 10,400. Total Design: 430,100.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Questions?

Ms. Bertram: I have a question in regards to a concern that came to me. In the Hunter River area on Route 2 there is a new church being constructed, and there's going to be community activities within that, and there could be a possibility where the community activity is going to be transferred through the day to the school, Central Queens School.

I'm wondering if it's possible, Madam Minister, for the department to look into a crosswalk similar to what's in Winsloe, when you go through the 50 zone in Winsloe, the orange sign above. If that could be looked into for the Hunter River area? For the main Route 2?

Ms. Shea: These are schoolchildren who are going to be utilizing the church?

Ms. Bertram: They're going to be in both, and halfway through the day they could be moving from institution to institution sort of

thing.

Ms. Shea: Okay. We'll look at that area and see if there's something we can do to make it safer.

Chair: Bridge Maintenance.
 "Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, travel and services to maintain small bridges." Administration: 4,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 915,100. Professional and Contract Services: 731,000. Salaries: 414,000. Travel and Training: 10,000. Total Bridge Maintenance: 2,074,600.

Question?

The hon. Member from North River-Rice Point.

Question, hon. member?

Ms. Bertram: Dunedin Bridge.

Mr. MacKinley: She has.

Ms. Bertram: Dunedin.

Chair: Dunedin. What about it?

Ms. Bertram: Is it going to get done this year?

Ms. Shea: No. I believe it's number three or four on the list right now.

Mr. MacKinley: It's going down.

Ms. Bertram: It's been on the Table for how many years?

Mr. MacKinley: The number is getting worse.

Ms. Shea: The good thing about it is I've been putting more money into bridge replacement and repairs, though. We should

get to it faster.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Mr. MacKinley: No.

Chair: You have a question?

Mr. MacKinley: I'll get back to it, I'm looking for my book.

Chair: Materials Testing Lab.
 "Appropriations provided for salaries and related support costs for the materials testing lab and quality assurance for maintenance and construction operations."
 Administration: 19,800. Equipment: 10,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 12,800. Professional and Contract Services: 2,500. Salaries: 1,204,600. Travel and Training: 41,200. Total Materials Testing Lab: 1,291,600.

Question from the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: This lab is in Mount Stewart?

Ms. Shea: That's correct.

Mr. R. Brown: It's staying, it's not moving to the new central lab?

Ms. Shea: No.

Mr. R. Brown: Good.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Total Capital Project Division: 10,287,300.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Provincial Waste Management. Provincial Waste Management. "Appropriations provided for the transportation, bailing and disposal of used tires as well as the closing and capping of provincial dump sites." Administration: 1,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 15,800. Professional and Contract Services: 610,000. Salaries: 51,900. Total Provincial Waste Management: 679,600.

Shall it carry?

Mr. MacKinley: No.

Chair: You have a question?

The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: My first question is - we're talking about waste management. I'd just like to talk about a question that I had asked in Question Period in regards to an audit on the function of the Brookfield facility.

According to the contract that was signed, there was supposed to be audits on its functioning on a yearly basis. Do you have that, Madam Minister?

Ms. Shea: We went back and couldn't find anywhere where there was a requirement for regular operational audits. What we did find was there is a requirement for Island Waste Management to report to the department of environment annually with an annual report on the operation of the facilities -

Ms. Bertram: Wouldn't that be it? Operational audit. So do you have that?

Ms. Shea: That's the report that goes to the department of environment. We can get that from the department of environment. Yes. But that's available -

Chair: The hon. Member from

Charlottetown-Spring Park.

Mr. MacAleer: Are we supposed to bring our ties down?

Ms. Shea: Yes, they go to Nova Scotia, I believe, isn't it?

Mr. MacAleer: Because we did have quite an accumulation of tires.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes, and this line item that's in the Transportation and Public Works relates to - this is how IWMC receives the funding for the tire tax that's collected at the point of sale. Provincial Treasury, it's the mechanism by which we transfer the - and is really there solely for the purpose of transferring the revenue from the tire surcharge, environmental surcharge, back to the corporation.

There's a large number of tires that are in storage and then there's the fresh tires, the fresh tires being what's coming in on a weekly basis from the various service centres. IWMC is working on a long-term plan right now to deal with both the annual supply, which there's a fairly strong demand for. There's a lot of activity in the recycling business right now. Fresh tires are in demand, the older tires, there's a little different situation. There's a company in upper Canada, St. Lawrence Cement, who actually has kilns that are environmentally capable of being able to incinerate those tires.

So suffice to say there's a few options that are being looked at right now. The corporation expects to come back to government, to Cabinet, treasury board with some options within the next month or so.

Chair: The hon. Member from North River-Rice Point.

Mr. MacKinley: I have nothing on the waste management, but I have it on capital projects.

Chair: You're going back. Okay, can we carry this section? Before we carry the bottom line -

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, all right, no problem.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Total Department of Transportation and Public Works: 87 million -

Mr. MacKinley: No, you can't carry that.

Chair: Can I read it first?

Mr. MacKinley: All right.

Chair: Okay, 87,358,700.

Mr. MacKinley: Now questions I have, and I was onto it the other day. It's lucky the mayor of Cornwall, Patrick MacFadyen, was watching it or heard about it.

I was talking about the access to the Cornwall business park. The province, and that's you people, have committed to provide proper access to the business park road. The business park is having difficulties in attracting business. This is what I'm getting from Cornwall council, we're getting request about business (Indistinct) park. However, they will not purchase the property until the access is addressed.

The provincial government is giving tax breaks to attract business in other parts of the province, and we're not complaining about that. We just want you to keep your word, Madam Minister.

But they're in competition with our park out

there. All the town of Cornwall is looking for is a safe access, which is the province's responsibility. They've also told me they've lost one business that is going to build in there, but is now moved to a rural area because the access to get onto the highway going to Charlottetown, especially between 7 a.m. till 9, is almost impossible if you are turning left.

I know myself, living almost across from it, if I'm going out of that particular area, sometimes I'll turn right, pull into the industrial park up there and come back down again. Or at 5 p.m. if you got to cross the road, you're better off going with the traffic, stopping the line of traffic and turn in and turn back down.

Have you got money in the budget to do that this year? Because you're holding up development of that park.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There's nothing planned in the road program for this year to do anything with that intersection. We are aware of Cornwall's concern about trying to get the development park with some more occupancy, and attract some tenants, and that they feel and some of their prospective tenants feel that signals would be advantageous.

So as you have mentioned earlier, there's as well a concern about a new access into the sports field and the elementary school. Avoiding having to go through the residential subdivision, and what we did is we met with officials from the town of Cornwall and we said: Let's do this in an organized fashion and maybe at which we'll have time to look at traffic flow in Cornwall and traffic flow on the Trans-Canada Highway through the town, and hire a consultant to help us look at current and future development and how we would plan for traffic.

That work is completed, something that we cost-shared with them 50-50. They managed the assignment that was done by CBCL Ltd. The intersection that you referred to and the other intersection are both intersections that are identified in there from the town of Cornwall -

Mr. MacKinley: You're talking about the one up on top of the hill?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: So which one are you going to do this year?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: From the prospective of the town of Cornwall it's important for their future growth. At the same time, our department is concerned that the Trans-Canada Highway, including the perimeter highway through Cornwall, on the east somewhere out in the Mount Albion area to, let's say, the west of Clyde River area, it's becoming very difficult for commercial traffic to make it through there in a timely fashion, given the number of lights that are there now and the number of lights that are being asked for, one of which is -

Mr. MacKinley: That's why you promised a bypass (Indistinct) 1998.

Chair: Wait till he finishes, please.

Mr. MacKinley: All right, go ahead.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: One potential new additional set of signals would be at the intersection that you referred to. The town of Stratford has also has two very similar situations where they'd like two new intersections that would be signalized if they're to see town planning go the way that they would prefer. But our department wants to take a little bit of a cautious approach to that, because at some point the perimeter

highway and the number of intersections and the number of signalized sets of signals that are there may become too difficult to manage in an orderly fashion.

So we're taking another look at that, and looking at all the intersections between Mount Albion and Clyde River, and asking ourselves: How many can we really manage?, and look at the entire quarter instead of just what's in the town of Cornwall or just what's in the Town of Stratford. We respect that those are two very important elements to their town plan, but we're looking at things from a provincial context as well. It can take a long time to get from Stratford to Cornwall. I do it often myself.

Mr. MacKinley: We know that. That's why we need the bypass. Which you didn't give. I brought that up in the House numerous times that if somebody from Island Tel, or Aliant now, is fixing a telephone - it's Island Tel, but it's been so long has now become Aliant, but if they're fixing something in New Haven or Crapaud, by the time they drive through Cornwall to get to Stratford the day is near gone. I mean, it's unproductive. We know that and we got to get the big trucks off the highways there and get it going.

The problem we have here is the business park that's effecting them. Now July 30th 2001, I'll table this letter, capital projects:

Dear Mr. McCarville - he is head the of administration in Cornwall - Department of Transportation and Public Works approves the development of the subdivision road to the Cornwall bypass park. Access to Route 1 shall be at a temporary access previous approved by the department. If it was previously done by the department. Your community should be aware that when the business bypark develops beyond six or seven business there may be long delays of

trucks entering onto Route 1 - well, that's correct. Improvement to Route 1 shall be required in the future to provide proper access to the business park road and the department will provide the improvements as required.

So what they're telling me now, there is requirement. If you go to one, two, three, four, there's probably six different outfits that are in there now that are using - there's probably six, there could be more, I just sort of jotted them down here.

The subdivision development agreement shall be signed between the town of Cornwall and the department. Further information on this agreement (Indistinct) obtained from Jake Barclay of this department. I don't even think Jake Barclay's there now, is he? Tom Harland probably was the deputy minister. All I'm saying is the town of Cornwall is getting tired, Madam Minister, of waiting for these broken promises that you said you were going to do.

You're affecting the business and the development there. The town of Cornwall pays 1.6 million in property taxes there a year to the government, plus any buildings that go up there will be taxed and a portion of that goes into you people.

So when are you going to get up and keep with some of commitments rather than postpone, postpone, postpone?

Ms. Shea: And we will. There are a number of issues right across the province where we have intersections that aren't safe and we've gotten to a number of them. So yeah, we do have Cornwall on the radar. If we did have the bypass, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, but you never got the bypass, it's going - the previous minister

was going to be around Cornwall the year 2000. Oh, what he was going to do. It's something like your gas, and we're going to be exporting off PEI. Dreamland is what you've been in. All we're asking you to do is keep to your commitment. I bet you those other places don't have a letter guaranteeing that you'll do it. It's right here.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: This is the final total, 87 million. But can you tell me where you're getting 13 million in gross revenues? Can you break down the gross revenues you're getting?

Ms. Shea: I think a lot of that would be highway safety.

Mr. R. Brown: So is it all highway safety money you just transfer right in?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes it is, it's mostly highway.

Ms. Shea: Or culverts, installation of culverts.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Vehicle registration, drivers licensing. We can bring back a breakdown of that number.

Mr. R. Brown: Yeah, I'd like a breakdown.

Madam Minister, according to the main estimates that were issued - and under Transport Canada I was quite surprised to see Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program. Last year they spent \$64 million on it and this year it's only 40 million. That's a \$50 million cut from the federal government. I also see in their federal budget that they're increasing money to the Asia/Pacific Gateway Corridor Transportation Infrastructure Fund. So did they take the money out of the highway - it

seems about equal. How much money are we getting from the federal government for the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program this year?

Ms. Shea: Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program - that's the SHIP - the 60 million and the 40 million since the last two years because that's been phased out. We have a couple of -

Mr. R. Brown: How much did we used to get under SHIP?

Ms. Shea: I think it was 11 million a year for five years.

Mr. R. Brown: Eleven million a year for five years.

Ms. Shea: That's been replaced with CSIF and the gas tax, federal funds.

Mr. R. Brown: So it's not new money (Indistinct). Then all these federal announcements that were made, all this new money, it's just money taken out of Transport Canada and put under different funds, then? We were led to believe that this is all new money coming in from Ottawa over and above what we've been getting with the \$25 million infrastructure fund.

Ms. Shea: Yeah, that's new money.

Mr. R. Brown: So are you saying SHIP, our \$11 million a year, is now under that program?

Ms. Shea: No, no.

Mr. R. Brown: So where do we get our money in the next couple of years to do our highway programs that we used to do under SHIP?

Ms. Shea: We are doing some this year under CSIF and under the gas tax fund. Now

there is this other \$25 million pot that - and some which will go to highways. So that's still being discussed with the federal government.

Mr. R. Brown: So you can really take 11 million a year off that used to be coming through SHIP, strategic infrastructure.

Ms. Shea: That's been replaced with CSIF -

Mr. R. Brown: Strategic infrastructure. So we're down to 14 million, that new program. I thought the way the feds introduced it, it was a base funding of \$25 million over and above all the other programs we got. Now we're starting to learn that we're losing the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program, which was a substantial program for the development of highways on PEI.

Ms. Shea: It was a dedicated highways program, yes, that's right. But the CSIF and the gas tax are not dedicated highways programs. However, we are using some of it for highways.

Mr. R. Brown: CSIF, what's that? What is the long name for it?

Ms. Shea: Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund.

Mr. R. Brown: Maintenance.

Ms. Shea: Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund. The \$11 million in SHIP is over five years. So that was a total of 11 million. Now that pot is 25 million annually for five years - seven years.

Chair: You didn't pave \$11 million a year (Indistinct).

Ms. Shea: It was 11 million over five years.

Mr. R. Brown: Are we getting any money under the Passenger Rail and Urban Transit

Security Contribution program under this federal program, or is that all for central Canada? There is 67 million new money in that.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No, there is no money for Prince Edward Island in that fund as far as I know.

Mr. R. Brown: So in the Asia/Pacific money which the federal government has passed - let's see how much money they're giving to their friends in BC - 43 million Asia/Pacific Gateway and Corridor Transportation Fund. So they get the 25 million, BC, plus they're getting 43 million under this Asia/Pacific. Do we have a special program like these other provinces seem to be getting out of Transport Canada? Is there any program in Transport Canada that all the other provinces seem to be getting?

Ms. Shea: There is also some discussion around Atlantic Gateway, yes.

Mr. R. Brown: But there is nothing in here for the Atlantic Gateway?

Ms. Shea: I thought there was a small amount of money in this year's budget for the Atlantic Gateway. I could be mistaken.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There is a borders and gateway fund in the federal budget that spans a number of years, if the Atlantic Gateway would seek to fit into that fund. The Asia/Pacific Gateway is one of the first examples of a strategic sort of gateway concept and they were out and have a dedicated fund. All other gateways - the Windsor, Detroit Gateway, Atlantic Gateway - there is a number of other gateways where there are major trade quarters that the federal government has identified and worked with the provinces to identify that are strategic in nature, and there is some funding set aside for that.

Mr. R. Brown: Yeah, okay.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: But generally speaking, there will be more infrastructure based on the analysis that we've done. As the minister said, there is still some back and forth with our federal officials to understand how these federal budget programs will translate into how we manage our infrastructure. Our analysis is there is more opportunity for infrastructure as a result of this.

Mr. R. Brown: Good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Glen Stewart-Bellevue Cove.

Dr. McKenna: I just want to thank the deputy minister and the staff for the amount of work they've done with our town to work on some of the projects they're working on. I know we did try to do a lot of work last year on realigning some of the roads and it didn't work out as well. So I'd want to say, contrary to this member over here, that the staff have been very good to work with our town and myself. I want to thank the deputy minister and Alan Aitken and the gang for all the work they've done.

But I want to make one point here. Just because you have a better access onto a business park, it's not going to guarantee that the business park is going to fill up. We have a turnoff lane into our business park and it's still not filling up. So I don't think that's going to be necessarily the answer. I just want to throw that out.

Chair: The hon. Member from North River-Rice Point.

Mr. MacKinley: I didn't say that you weren't cooperating. The town gets along very well with the department of highways and including myself with roads being paved and that, but you have made a

commitment. We're fortunate, we got Tim Banks out in our area, you don't have in your area- but builds most of the things over there. But in our particular area, our industrial park - the town of Cornwall has - even though the member from Stratford says that it's not going to fill up, we have got people that say they're not going in there for the simple reason that they're not getting safe access onto the highway. Regardless of the (Indistinct) things from over in Stratford. Apparently he has trouble with the smell coming over from Charlottetown, don't you, or something? You'll have to look after that.

So the question we have here is that in order for the industrial park, they tell me, to build up, they got to have a better access. Now another question I have too. If somebody got in an accident in that access, can the province be held liable for approving it? Like I mean, that is very dangerous when you look at how it comes out and no lights. Can the province be held negligent? Some people are telling me that if somebody gets in an accident there you could be held negligent.

Ms. Shea: That would have to be determined by the courts. There is probably a number of intersections on PEI where we've gotten calls to have some changes and we can't do them all at once.

Mr. MacKinley: You got to look at if an intersection was in and you didn't know better, then it's called an act of God or something. But if you do something - I remember one time when we did a highway, if you move anything on the highway, cut down the hills or anything, you got to bring the whole highway to national standards. Is that correct, Mr. Deputy?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: But if you just go over and recap it, well then, you're not responsible.

All I'm saying, Madam Minister, is that access was put in in quite a hurry and it went in on a temporary basis and now it's still a temporary basis. This is six years. How many years is it going to be a temporary basis? That's what people are telling me out there.

Ms. Shea: We have it on our radar, so if it's a problem with safety we'll have a look at it.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: If I could add to that.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, go ahead.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: One of the points that has been discussed in the work that we've done with the town is: When the Cornwall bypass is completed, will that same need be there? Would those signals, those turning lanes, all of the - it's a bit of a Catch-22. If the Cornwall bypass goes ahead, there is a lot of traffic that will be pulled off of that main road. So some of the needs that are being talked about and discussed today that are being proposed to be funded would not be necessary when the Cornwall bypass comes to life.

The minister mentioned last week about route 2. There are tenders out on route 2 right now. All members in the House know route 2 is getting better. From the department's standpoint, we can see a light at the end of the tunnel. Route 2 at some point will be a pretty good highway from east to west. The department's plan, that that was the priority, when that is at a point where we're comfortable, pretty well there, it's time to look at the Cornwall bypass seriously. Some of those problems along the perimeter highway and in Cornwall will become smaller problems when the Cornwall bypass is extended.

Mr. MacKinley: Well, yes, I can see that point. If the Cornwall bypass was to go

through you could probably eliminate a few lights in Cornwall too.

That was a promise seven years ago. That's like somebody going to the hospital with a major operation: We won't bother sending you to Halifax, we're going to have that here in another four or five years, go on home and wait. So that's where your problem is coming in.

You've been using this excuse for all these years and the Cornwall bypass, as the minister said, three at least down the road. So it's darn near ten years since it was first promised or more.

So all I'm saying is it's unsafe, you have to bring it up to safety or build a bypass. The residents have been after that. A McCready lady was out there, I think it was Jesse McCready on a safety committee. Did a lot of work on this and the town of Cornwall did, and it sort of fell on deaf ears. It's been excuses after excuses.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay.

Mr. MacDonald: (Indistinct) deputy about - when I hit Mount Albion coming in every day. There's quite a change in the Trans-Canada Highway from there in, where that cement is. Are there any plans for fixing that part of the Trans Canada? I imagine it's on your radar.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'd have to go back and check.. We have a five-year rolling plan. I can't say for sure where it fits on that. But I could check and get back to you on that. Sort of see when we have it for a planning period. But I won't be surprised to see it at the - somewhere in that five-year plan.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Mr. MacKinley: No I have a question.

Chair: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: No, I got a question.

Chair: It's carried, but you can ask your question.

Mr. MacKinley: All right. In Warren Grove you put a sand pile there last year. We all know you had to have a sand pile, but what you did, you (Indistinct) right in front of a residential house. The Warren Grove community council arranged a meeting, I went to it, your department came out to. They made a good job too. Are you planning on moving that sand pile this year so that the people in that area won't have to look at it? It's right in front of their houses.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes, we are looking to find a location for it. As well, operationally I think if you look at the trucks that - and the area that they serve, there's probably a better location. It's just a question of finding one. That land was owned by the province -

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, I know that.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It was easy, it was late in the year, relatively speaking, when the pile had to be constructed and it ended up at that location.

So it's something that managers at highway maintenance division and I have talked about, and I believe they had consulted with community council and the neighbours that we will look for another location.

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, they told us at that meeting that night that they would try and look for another location. But the thing is I know it was late and everything, but you have a staff in there, and I don't like using the excuse: It was late, we had to get going.

Why won't you plan that a little farther ahead?

Now should be the time you should be planning what you're going to be doing in the fall rather than the last minute. Why won't you? Have you got a site picked out for that sand pile yet?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'm not sure what the reasons were for the timing exactly that made it late last year, but your point is well taken and I'm sure as soon as the staff down there get caught up with budget - and there is a certain seasonal approach to all of our management, and that'll be one of the things that they'll need to work on. I agree, now is the time to be looking.

Mr. MacKinley: All right.

Chair: Interministerial Women's Secretariat. Interministerial Women's Secretariat. "Appropriations provided to support the functions of the Secretariat and the Advisory Council on the Status of Women." Administration: 3,900. Equipment: 700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,000. Professional and Contract Services: 10,800. Salaries: 127,900. Travel and Training: 3,900. Grants: 277,800. Total Interministerial Women's Secretariat: 427,000.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Call the hon. Minister of Health, Social Services and Seniors. I think we're on page 108.

Hon. minister.

Mr. Gillan: Members, I'd like to have permission to bring on the director of finance.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Gillan: Mr. Lorne Clow.

Chair: Agreed.

Corporate and Financial Services. General. "Appropriations provided for the operations of the offices of the Minister and the Deputy Minister to support functions and services related to finance, payroll, human resources, labour relations, communications, program development and evaluation, FOIPP, records information management, risk management and the Director of the Senior's Secretariat." Administration: 82,700. Debt: nil. Equipment: 4,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 67,000. Professional and Contract Services: 204,900. Salaries: 1,597,200. Travel and Training: 177,900. Grants: 181,600. Total General: 2,315,300.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: No, I'd like to look at the grants (Indistinct).

Chair: Do you have a list of the grants?

Mr. Gillan: Yes we do and we'll also give you some other materials at this time as well as four different sections that we're going to be pass over to you.

Leader of the Opposition: What's the debt? It says that there's 900 in debt.

Mr. Gillan: This is the fees that are paid to the credit service bureaus when we do audits of the social assistance clients. That is those activity fees.

Chair: Do you want us to continue on till we get the handouts?

Mr. MacKinley: No, I got a question.

It was brought to my attention by nurses looking to get hired that they can get hired at the Queen Elizabeth, but it's not permanent. It is not a permanent position. They're looking for a permanent position, they tell me that you can't get a permanent position. You can get lots of work -

Mr. Gillan: Hon. member, that's in health and we're in social services, so if you could just hold that we will get there -

Mr. MacKinley: All right.

Mr. Gillan: - to talk to you about the nurses, if you don't mind.

Mr. MacKinley: No, that's fine. I just want to make sure I don't miss it, because -

Mr. Gillan: Thank you.

Chair: Social Programs. General.
 "Appropriations provided for program direction/support, policy analysis and program development related to social programs." Administration: 31,000. Equipment: 1,600. Materials, Supplies and Services: 6,200. Professional and Contract Services: 151,000. Salaries: 313,100. Travel and Training: 17,500. Grants: 769,600. Total General: 1,290,000.

Mr. Gillan: The director here is Cathy Jones, she has been here for quite some time. It is a large area as you can see. The budget for the social area covers the Premier's Action Committee, family violence, the office of the director, NGOs are in here - the non-government organizations - and the public guardian is included here.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Social Programs. "Appropriations

provided for assistance to individuals and families in need through programs of social assistance, disability support programs, day care and other related programs services."

Administration: 119,600. Equipment: 20,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 60,700. Professional and Contract Services: 88,700. Salaries: 5,524,000. Travel and Training: 143,800. Grants: Medical, Dental, Optical: 1,123,000. Special Needs: 255,400. Other Social Service Grants: 281,400. Cash and Material Benefits: 27,107,600. Disability Support Program: 9,047,600. Day Care Subsidy: 3,727,000. Community Grants: 5,526,400. Total Social Programs: 53,025,200.

Mr. Gillan: We have two coordinators, Bob Creed in the east and Pat MacDonald in the west. This is really the major heart of the social program which distributes, of course, the grants.

Chair: Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from North River-Rice Point.

Mr. MacKinley: If a person is in a nursing home and their spouse is living at home, does this fall under any of this part here?

Mr. Gillan: No, a little bit further on. You're thinking of income splitting?

Mr. MacKinley: I'm looking at the income splitting. I had some phone calls where a person's spouse is in a nursing home.

Mr. Gillan: We can deal with it here or under housing, but it's probably as good here as anyplace else.

Mr. MacKinley: Anyway, this lady phoned me and her spouse is in a nursing home full-time. So they take, what, half of his pensions, is it?

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: But it only leaves her about \$1,100 a month to live on.

Mr. Gillan: Keep going because - the difficulty is, that's a (Indistinct) of health as well as you know, the long-term care stabilization.

Mr. MacKinley: This is long-term care. But I'm just trying to figure this out. Anyway, her spouse is in long-term care. Split the income - he had a small pension I guess - so they split the income, income splitting. It figures out she got about 1,100 or 1,200 a month to live on, which isn't that much. She's got oil, lights and heat and taxes and whatever. If that particular person had money in the bank from inheritance or something, like it was left to her, do they take the interest on that money and split it 50-50?

Mr. Gillan: Yes. I'll get the director to talk.

Lorne Clow Director: Hon. member, with the recent changes we no longer means test the individuals. They're strictly income tested now. So what would have been considered certainly previously before January is that we would have looked at the total amount in the bank account, whereas we'd only be looking at the income that may generate at the present. If there is an individual that's in a home and someone is still in the community, we would be looking at separating out the income that would be generated.

Mr. MacKinley: So all right. There is an inheritance that came in to that person since the spouse ended up in the home and there are dividends being paid or interest. You would look at splitting that 50-50, would you?

Lorne Clow Director: The income.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, it's income. So it's 50-50, fine. Another one, too, that's been brought to my attention is this new program looks after four and five level care?

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: What about the one, two and three level of care? For instance, if somebody is in three level of care?

Mr. Gillan: That's still in community care facilities.

Mr. MacKinley: Like the Anderson Lodge or somewhere's like that.

Mr. Gillan: That's right.

Mr. MacKinley: But that's still fairly expensive.

Mr. Gillan: It's expensive, and we last year increased that per diem from 45 to \$49. We worked closely with the association - per day, that's right - and we're working closely with the association in that regard. But it does not apply to levels one, two or three, you're correct. This is only for nursing home care.

Mr. MacKinley: Yes I know. But I'm wondering why it doesn't apply to one, two and three. This is from residents coming to me about it, especially the two and three level of care.

Mr. Gillan: Basically what it is is that in the community care facilities the residents for the most part are able to take care of themselves, as opposed to nursing home care. In level four, which you mentioned, they would need the services of probably one individual, a level five, more than one. Sometimes two individuals to help transport them, etc.

We have blended that now, hon. member.

We do not this year from now on say one is four and another one is five, it's a blended rate. But you are correct. That's the difference between the community care where they don't need nursing.

Mr. MacKinley: They still got nurses on in community care. They might not need as many nurses.

Mr. Gillan: Some do, some don't.

Mr. MacKinley: Now another question I have for you on community care. How much is it a day for residents in a community care, a number, say, three level care? What does it run a month, say, roughly?

Mr. Gillan: Again, the rate that the private owner would charge is up to that individual. The government provides a subsidy, as I mentioned and as you know, which is \$49 a day.

Mr. MacKinley: So anyone that goes into one of those homes gets \$49 a day?

Mr. Gillan: That's correct.

Mr. MacKinley: Every person, regardless of income?

Mr. Gillan: No. It is income based as well.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah. Let's say now - let's go to the one up in Crapaud. I believe there are so many full-time care beds and I believe there is so much community care.

Mr. Gillan: That's correct.

Mr. MacKinley: All right. So the full-time beds are looked after to a certain extent by government if people don't pay.

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: But they also have level

three there just down at the door from level four.

Mr. Gillan: That's right.

Mr. MacKinley: So how much would it cost a month to have somebody in a level three at a community care facility like that?

Mr. Gillan: It's difficult for me to give a definitive answer to that because the places do vary considerably.

Mr. MacKinley: I'll leave you with this.

Mr. Gillan: Okay.

Mr. MacKinley: If your department could find out and we'll use that as an example. It's coming to me, if there are two family members in a level three care, two and three, and they're there for a year or two, it eats up their income pretty quick, or any of their assets.

Mr. Gillan: That's correct.

Mr. MacKinley: I'll wait until you come back with the information. That's been brought to my attention.

Mr. Gillan: You know that the general answer is that one is nursing service and the other is not.

Mr. MacKinley: You still have nurses there, there has got to be so many nurses -

Chair: We have community care facilities up west, they don't need nursing services.

Mr. MacKinley: No nurses?

Mr. Gillan: No. Most do not.

Mr. MacKinley: So you're saying up west, a community care three, level three, doesn't have to have nursing services? Is that right,

Mr. Minister?

Mr. Gillan: That's correct.

Mr. MacKinley: The only time you need a nurse or an RN is when you're into level four and five?

Mr. Gillan: That is correct. Having said that, hon. member, you probably will say: I know when the doctor visits and I know that nurses do visit the community care, but that is up to the insistence of the owner.

Mr. MacKinley: I have been in a community care place, I won't say where they are, but there have been nurses working there.

Chair: Andrews put nurses on but you pay extra for it.

Mr. MacKinley: No, but they work there. So they pay extra -

Chair: (Indistinct) like Andrews Lodge, they use level three, but she pays extra because (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: I believe she is a nurse herself too.

Mr. Gillan: My mother was at Park West Lodge and of course they have nurses there as well. But you pay for the service.

Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I was going to ask you to just, for myself and everybody else, describe the difference between one to five. But I believe that one to three is without nurses and four to five is with nurses. Who determines which level you are, the department or do people ask for it?

Mr. Gillan: There is an assessment. Usually the individual, the family, will have a pretty good idea that mom or dad is no longer able to take care of themselves, so they are ready to go to a nursing home. Usually the family doctor has been consulted prior to this as well. They will say that yes, they really now should be moving out of their apartment or wherever they were and seeking a nursing home. However, the first formality part of it is an assessment is done by -

Leader of the Opposition: You can go to a nursing home and not really need nursing care yet. So you're basically living there where you get your meals prepared and all those things, but you don't have nursing care. So you're basically dormitory almost, sort of -

Mr. Gillan: That's correct, yes.

Leader of the Opposition: - living. I hate to use -

Mr. Gillan: That is, but that's -

Leader of the Opposition: If that is unpolitically I apologize.

Mr. Gillan: No, not at all.

Leader of the Opposition: That's level one to five. I wanted to ask here about medical, dental and optical. Who does that cover?

Mr. Gillan: It's a little bit further on than this. But -

Chair: (Indistinct) grants, social programs, people in (Indistinct).

Mr. Gillan: Oh yes, yes, yes, yes. Okay.

The question again is?

Leader of the Opposition: Who does this cover? You got 1.13 million here, does this

cover all children in the province or is this people on social assistance?

Mr. Gillan: Just social assistance.

Leader of the Opposition: Just social assistance?

Mr. Gillan: That's right.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Now, the threshold is if you're on social assistance you get those things covered?

Mr. Gillan: That is correct, yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Here is where I think we have the major issue in our society. I don't have the answer for it yet, hopefully I'll have the opportunity to develop one, but I call it the gap. There is the gap there, where if you're on social assistance you get a lot of those things covered, medical, dental, optical, medications, a lot of those things. Let's pretend for a second social assistance goes up to 18 or \$19,000 a year, somewhere in -

Mr. Gillan: This year we are putting it up, approximately (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: In that vicinity.

Mr. Gillan: That's it.

Leader of the Opposition: But let's say your - any of the four of us sitting right here - and you make a certain salary, most of that you're going to get covered.

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Because it goes with benefits. Let's say you're making between \$20,000 and \$40,000, and you don't have any coverage through your work. What options do you have to get coverage for those things?

Mr. Gillan: I know the scenario you have described, and you have done it a good service. We also call those people, as you well know, hon. leader, the working poor. We indicate that there are walls there that they can't get over or go around. This year what we have done in social services, we have increased the ceiling by \$3,000 from \$22,000 up to \$25,000. Actually, it's \$24,800. So that a few more - there would be about another 500 would be able to access those easier programs, social assistance programs.

But you're still painting a picture, one of common sense, is that: How does government, and I would say that generically, provide assistance to those?

It's difficult. What we do have are some medication programs that people can tap into, in that age bracket, and the medications for their children can be taken care of. But they do live in that very difficult section of how much we can give them, which is not the same as social assistance, and then when you're able to have a job, or two incomes, that those people then can pay for their own, but it's the in-between that does suffer.

Leader of the Opposition: Do you have any idea of how many people are in that category?

An Hon. Member: How big is your (Indistinct)?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: Usually if you make, let's say, over \$35,000, usually you have benefits to a certain extent, usually. How many people, though, would be in that program? Do you have any idea?

Mr. Gillan: (Indistinct) but it's higher than that. It's that low income - we have family programs for the dental and all that type of

thing. I don't have a figure, hon. leader, right now at my fingertips to indicate what proportion of the population would be in the working poor.

Leader of the Opposition: You said you increased the level by \$3,000 this year?

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: So that means that those people - even if they're out working, they're not drawing social assistance - now they qualify for this medical, dental and optical?

Mr. Gillan: That's right. We will now push up the ceiling -

Leader of the Opposition: How much more does that -

Mr. Gillan: Five hundred. We can now catch another 500.

Leader of the Opposition: How much more does that cost you financially?

Mr. Gillan: For those 500? Ninety thousand dollars. That just with the family benefits. So there's \$100,000 there roughly that we have added for another group of people.

Leader of the Opposition: I think, too, the other problem - and you know these problems. You and I have discussed them before.

Let's say, you're making \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year, but you're not covered. You don't have any medical coverage. You've got an illness, you're in the hospital, the hospital room's costing the government, if it's Queen Elizabeth Hospital, approximately \$900 to \$1,000 a day, but you get all your medications covered. The second you're dismissed from the hospital, you leave, and your medications are no

longer covered. There are some people, and I don't blame them, if I were in that situation I would want to stay in the hospital longer, if I were going to get my medications.

Mr. Gillan: And doctors keep people in longer.

Leader of the Opposition: And doctors probably keep them in, and that's good, I'm not complaining that they do that. Wouldn't it be better if we found a program out there that, almost like more home care, but even for those people, where you can let them go out of the hospital, to open up those beds - because there's a shortage of beds, too, and it costs a lot of money - where we can still cover their medications for a certain portion of time. It's tough for me being in opposition, I don't have the resources you have. Are those things being looked into? You have a policy division over here in social programs, are they working on those things?

Mr. Gillan: We always want to be able to increase the coverage that you are suggesting. We always want to alleviate the roadblocks that are there. One of the (Indistinct) is that the Prince County and the QE, where patients who don't have access to those medications if they go home, so they're kept out there. And there's others necessary to go in, so the bed is not available.

So it's the Catch-22. How much more do you increase social assistance to catch some of that, how much more do you put into home care? Now what we have been working with is the federal government and the federal government has been very reluctant - both this federal government and the previous one - in getting more into home care. Now what we're asking them is to enter into a program with all of the provinces so that they will give us two

weeks of those medications that they're receiving in the hospital that we can discharge them and they would -

Leader of the Opposition: That's a good idea. I'm for that.

Mr. Gillan: But again, in a small province like ours, that's very expensive, to the point of being nearly prohibitive.

Leader of the Opposition: I realize that. Almost like funding the province, and I'll be the first one to admit it. We have trouble funding a catastrophic drug program, but we need the federal government (Indistinct).

Mr. Gillan: That's right. We need the federal government and right now, as you well know, the federal government is putting its aim and its energies and money into wait times and this type of thing. Again, very good, but they had to pick and choose. So what we're seeing is that if we can get some catastrophic drugs, a pharmaceutical strategy, with a national level, that is going to address -

Leader of the Opposition: So your policy people are working on this?

Mr. Gillan: They certainly are.

Leader of the Opposition: That's what I want to know.

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: What line item did you use in assessing people going into the senior homes?

Mr. Gillan: We're on social programs right now.

Mr. R. Brown: Yes, that's the home care - well, the hon. Member from North River-Rice Point was at it.

Mr. Gillan: Do you want to continue on?

Mr. R. Brown: No, no, where is it? Where's that program at?

Mr. Gillan: The answer to that is there is no line item for that, the assessment is done in relationship to the program. So the answer is different line levels depending upon the program that is being offered.

Mr. R. Brown: So when someone comes into the department looking for a subsidy under that, you assess their income, you did in the past and you do now, and I guess I'm trying to figure out do you use line 150 or 235 of the income statement?

Mr. Gillan: In the income statement it's line 236.

Mr. R. Brown: Ok, good. That's below 235.

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: So, I'm a senior, I come in and I lay out this, and I can afford some contribution. I pay the government that contribution?

Mr. Gillan: Well -

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct).

Lorne Clow Director: Okay, hon. member, what we do is the individual would come in and they would apply, and we would look at all their income and look at line 236, and they may have some ability to pay -

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

Lorne Clow Director: - so they may have

to pay the home. Again, if we're talking, regardless if it's community care or if it's a private nursing home, they may have to pay a contribution towards their care.

Mr. R. Brown: Yes.

Lorne Clow Director: If it's on levels one, two or three that would be covered under social assistance and we would pay the home directly.

Mr. R. Brown: Under social assistance?

Lorne Clow Director: Yes. That would come out of our grants, under social assistance, under cash and materials, and if it's through the department, for level four or five, it would be paid by the department of health. The private nursing home would bill the department of health.

Mr. R. Brown: And where's that expense?

Lorne Clow Director: That would be on the department of health side. What happens in social programs, in social services and seniors, is that we do the assessments for the levels four and five, but it's paid actually from the department of health budget.

Mr. R. Brown: So any shortfalls are paid from the Department of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

Lorne Clow Director: Assessment only here. We pay levels one, two and three for community care, but levels four and five for nursing level care would be the Department of Health, Social Services and Seniors.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay. Good. I'll wait for that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove.

Ms. Bertram: Okay. I have several

questions. First, from budget to budget, administration is off and salaries are off. How many layoffs were in this section, Mr. Minister? I'm looking at last year's budget and this year's budget.

Mr. Gillan: Most of this is recasting, and as you well know, we are now in the second year of the separation between health and social services. But it's taking - and it'll probably in some instances take three years to get all of the accounts moved from the various areas, if they were in health, over, or even from within social services, moving around.

I'm going to ask Mr. Clow to give the House a general accounting of where we are with recasting. It has taken he and his workers a long time. I think we have most of it done now, a lot of it here under social programs, hon. member, that is the answer for a great portion of it. But then I'll go on further after he's finished.

Lorne Clow Director: Hon. member, from budget to budget what you see from 2006-2007 from last year's budget book to 2006-2007 restated in this year's budget book -

Ms. Bertram: Yes.

Lorne Clow Director: - there's this -

An Hon. Member: Budget book.

Lorne Clow Director: Yes, in the estimates book.

An Hon. Member: You said budget.

Lorne Clow Director: All right. What you'll note is that there was a restatement, and that was for really three things.

One was, and it's described on page 177 of this year's estimates book, in the schedule reclassifications, we moved \$401,000 to

Transportation and Public Works for leases. They now have control of the leases of any properties that were in. We transferred a million dollars to employee benefits and that would be for dollars associated with the uniform pension plan, being as the pension plan has been changed to the Civil Service Superannuation Fund now. So the monies that the former regents would have controlled has been transferred over from employee benefits.

Thirdly, we moved over dollars to the department of health, \$185,000. You'll probably see it as a net of 170,000-some thousand in the reclassifications because there was some back and forth for public health nurses. We had the funding and they had the positions, so we moved that money over. So that's to explain from the estimates presentation last year 2006-2007 to the estimates presentation this year.

Ms. Bertram: I guess I just go to the Auditor General's report, though, in regards to Program Renewal and the effectiveness and the dollars saved on all this.

Mr. Gillan: So the short answer, then, under administration is we've reflected transfer of money to Transportation and Public Works and also to Provincial Treasury.

Ms. Bertram: Just in regards to professional and contract services on page 109 that we're on, to the tabled documents of professional services. Legal is under this section legal services. You had budgeted 183 which is the same basically in the budget from the book last year, but yet you underspent and you're still budgeting less for this coming year.

Mr. Gillan: Again, here my note indicates that for all of these accounts it was consultants, contracts and legal services that the recast budget was submitted to treasury.

Ms. Bertram: No, I guess, Mr. Minister, there was 90,000, yet your professional services are only - in this document only saying \$5,000. So where is the rest?

Lorne Clow Director: We just didn't do some things under professional services that just didn't occur. I guess this is the short answer.

Ms. Bertram: No, but you did spend 90,000.

Chair: You want to know where the 90,000 went?

Ms. Bertram: Yes, I'd like to know where that went.

Chair: Do you not have that in the handout?

Ms. Bertram: All it says is 5,000 legal, that's all I have.

Mr. Gillan: You want to know what the legal services were for 90,000.

Ms. Bertram: Where did the 90 go? Yes. I thought that was the point of these documents were for.

Mr. Gillan: Now there was 5,000- I have figures here, hon. member - 5,000 was spent on legal, 67,000 was spent on other contracts, consultants ate up 18,000 of that. So you are asking for - you want to see those contracts?

Ms. Bertram: Like even your 67,000 breakdown.

Mr. Gillan: That's the breakdown of 90,000. So it's 18, 67, and five.

Ms. Bertram: No, but who got the contract services. I'd like to see -

Mr. Gillan: You want now 67 broke down?

Ms. Bertram: I'd just like to see where the professional and contract services -

Mr. Gillan: All right, so you're asking for the three to be broken down.

Ms. Bertram: Yes. Now the legal fees, the -

Chair: One at a time here, now.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Gillan: So what we will do, hon. member, is what we have spent we will account for. We'll give you those.

Chair: The hon. Member from Belfast-Pownal Bay.

Mr. MacDonald: (Indistinct) question and maybe I'm on the wrong section. Corporate and financial services, your organization. Under that area, there's a lot of TAs, what does that mean? Are they permanent -

Mr. Gillan: No, that's temporary, temporary assignments.

Mr. MacDonald: Are those temporary assignments - are they getting Blue Cross benefits?

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. MacDonald: Why are they - I know one personally. I'm just wondering why it's taking so long to become a member of the civil service? Is there a program you have to go through?

Lorne Clow Director: Hon. member, there may be - the individual in a temporary assignment may be from another section or another part of government and they are just in that position temporarily. So that's why we just note that they are in there as a temporary assignment.

Mr. MacDonald: Okay.

Chair: Could be transferred from one department to another.

Mr. MacDonald: Even if they are not in the civil service.

Lorne Clow Director: If they're not in the civil service, if it would be more than a year, they would be receiving benefits. For a year.

Mr. MacDonald: If they're there for a year, they would receive benefits.

Lorne Clow Director: They'd receive benefits.

Mr. MacDonald: I see, okay. We're both kind of interested in just what that was. Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: I noticed under disabilities support, your forecast is 8.56 million. You went over budget on that. Now last year the disabilities support group told you you weren't budgeting enough. But you told the disabilities support: Yes, we're going to live within our budget. They told you, you were wrong. I guess this is prove that they were right. Just say yes.

Mr. Gillan: Because it is not right. We were able to keep it down to 400,000 this year. We were partially right.

Mr. R. Brown: So 50-50 then.

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: Disability support is 50%, and your 50% wrong.

Mr. Gillan: That's correct.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Healthy Child Development.
“Appropriations provided for youth programs and services including Healthy Child Development Strategy, day care, early childhood learning and autism early intervention.” Administration: 20,300. Equipment: 400. Materials, Supplies and Services: 4,100. Professional and Contract Services: 82,000. Salaries: 452,100. Travel and Training: 30,500. Grants: 3,770,000. Total Healthy Child Development: 4,359,400.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: Did we get a copy of the grants?

Mr. Gillan: Yes, you do have. It should be there in -

Mr. R. Brown: Last year you had budgeted for grants 6,849,000, but you only spent 3 million or 6 million and you only spent 3 million. Why the difference?

Mr. Gillan: Sorry, I was doing something else. The big one there is the early learning and child care grants. I think you were there at that announcement, hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square, at the Basilica Rec Centre. What we are doing now is the federal dollars that came down, the 4.4 million, that is what we have now reallocated. We have now booked the 2006 and 2007 and we are reflecting it in a three-year budget. So it was the 4 million that we released that day.

Mr. R. Brown: You paid out \$3 million in grants. That's what you're forecasting?

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: I don't have that sheet here. You have a sheet with 3,078,000 on it, in your package that you gave us.

Mr. Gillan: It's there. You see it there, hon. member?

Mr. R. Brown: Yes. So we don't have it broken down by daycare centre?

Mr. Gillan: No, and I don't have that here either.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay. What do we have in terms of the federal governments - what are we doing in terms of the federal government's so-called tax incentive to create spaces in the private sector? They said they got \$250 million set aside. How much is allocated for PEI?

Mr. Gillan: One point one million of that.

Mr. R. Brown: That's only tax credits, that's not actual money? How do people access that money to create spaces?

Mr. Gillan: Here on PEI we're fortunate that we do have sufficient spaces. It's the other provinces that don't have. We have argued that - and I think successfully - to the point that on Prince Edward Island spaces and capacity are not a difficulty. What we do have is difficulty around seasonality, people working part of the year and then not having a place - daycare, etc. Actually there is a federal hearing being held next week on that and Prince Edward Island has been invited to make a presentation there.

So even though money has been allocated to spaces I think it's safe to say that we're going to be able to make use of it in other areas.

Mr. R. Brown: No, but it's only a tax

advantage. Correct me if I'm wrong. If I open up space -

Mr. Gillan: No, it's not. It's real dollars.

Mr. R. Brown: Coming out of the 250?

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: How is that going to be allocated?

Mr. Gillan: Again, it will go to .43% which will make it \$1.1 million.

Mr. R. Brown: So you're going to get \$1.1 million from the feds. How are you going to allocate that out?

Mr. Gillan: What we would like to be able to do, and this is what our arguments will be based on, is that we want to use it for professional development, the staff we want to - the dollars go directly to the operation and expenses of the daycare themselves. In other words, we want to be able to use it for what Prince Edward Island deems is necessary.

Mr. R. Brown: So that's over and above the money you already got?

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: I don't see any line item here.

Mr. Gillan: It is separate from the 4.4.

Mr. R. Brown: I don't see any line where you're spending that \$1 million. I could see us spending that \$1 million.

Mr. Gillan: We didn't get it yet. That's what we have to argue for.

Mr. R. Brown: Oh, so we didn't get it.

Mr. Gillan: No.

Mr. R. Brown: A minute ago you said we got it.

Mr. Gillan: You're talking about the childcare spaces coming down, so we are supposed to get \$1.1 million.

Mr. R. Brown: Of money?

Mr. Gillan: That's correct.

Mr. R. Brown: So if the Premier wants to go, okay.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier Binns: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I interrupt this important business of the House to recognize another group who have distinguished themselves in Canada, Islanders who have succeeded at the recent Winter Games in Whitehorse. The medal winners, along with some of the coaches and relatives and game staff, have joined us here this afternoon. I'd just like to take a moment - we did have a statement earlier this afternoon, but I want to congratulate from the House, again, the four medal winners. I guess it's more than four, perhaps bear with me, I'll just go through that a little bit, but I think we have Patrick Knox here, of course who led with a gold in judo, we have Alicia Wilbert who had a bronze medal in judo, as well, another bronze, Carrie Callahan has been able to join us.

Of course, this didn't happen by accident, they had great coaching, and I'm not sure if the three involved I want to mention are here or not. But Gordie Foster, Frankie Gallison and John Wilbert, played a very big part in the success of these Islanders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Binns: I believe, Mr. Chairman, we also have the men's curling team here, who of course distinguished themselves with their prowess in) Whitehorse. We have the skip Brett Gallant, Adam Casey, Anson Carmody and the lead Alex MacFadyen. Perhaps they can all stand.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Binns: Of course, that didn't happen without some support as well, and the coach Katie Gallant as well as team manager Gordon MacFadyen played a big role. Beyond that, we know that the parents, family members, other community people have been a big part of making their success take place.

I want to as well, recognize some of our mission staff who did a great job, not just with these athletes, but with our whole contingent going to Whitehorse. Obviously it's a big undertaking, and I think we have Francois Caron who is Chef de mission here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Binns: As well as Joanne Wallace and Ted Lawlor. I'm not sure if they're able to join us this afternoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Binns: Again, congratulations on a job well done. You've made Prince Edward Island proud.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome all our medal winners here to the Legislative Assembly this afternoon, all their coaches and

administrators and everyone. I know a few of the names, I recognize some of the faces. I enjoyed following the Canada Games. I can tell you, all Islanders were very proud of your accomplishments. Anytime that we win medals, I know that each and every Islander here watching is very proud.

I know that a great deal of work and dedication goes into preparing for it. I know that many of you have other sports that you are involved in and other tournaments that you are involved in. We're just looking forward to following your careers. I think you set a great example for Islanders and I wish you all the best in the future.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs and also responsible for sport.

Mr. MacFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I, too, want to extend a welcome here to the Legislature to the athletes. For most of us that we don't know, in order for the athlete to be represented at the Canada Games they practice for 40 months leading up to the games, and these athletes are the best athletes representing their divisions. So when you win a medal it's quite an accomplishment.

As well, for the coaches that work with them, the parents who supported them in obtaining the ability to go away to represent the province, and to the mission staff who dedicated a little better than two weeks in Whitehorse under extreme conditions in regards to making sure that everything ran tickety-boo. I think that Islanders can be proud of the mission staff, but particularly proud of the coaches and for the job that they have done in representing Prince

Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Spring Park.

Mr. MacAleer: It's often said at previous meetings that I've been at that this minister that just spoke is one of the best ministers the province has ever had in support of sports. I certainly want to recognize that.

There are people in the audience maybe that don't get recognized and I see a couple up there that work really hard at developing table tennis in this province, Najmul and Farida Chishti. I know they also are part of the mission staff and I realize maybe they have other political leanings, but I can tell you they work really hard at their sport, and I think they should be recognized here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Member from North River-Rice Point.

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I always like to see the athletes here and it's great that you took back the gold medals and the silvers and that for us here in the province. I see Paul Knox, a former resident of District 16, and his son who started learning wrestling at North River Rink. I stand to be corrected. I want to also congratulate the many parents and the many coaches that have been mentioned. The many parents and that that saw and made sure that their families got to these events, so we as politicians could get up and recognize them because they've done an awful lot for us here in the province.

When I'm on my feet, the minister of environment's family have been great

contributors to the athletes in the province. I believe he finished first in Canada in one of the last races. Also my cousin, Jody Sanderson (Indistinct) went to the iron man competition - was home this summer and did tremendous in representing Canada at world events.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Ballem: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am not going to go into some of the things that were already said, but for the athletes, they know the accomplishment that they made at the Canada Games. But something that we don't recognize in this province - and I think it was Ted Lawlor a number of years ago when he was a chef during the Thunder Bay games - we look at the expectation as a province of what we should do and what our athletes should accomplish.

When we were at the Canada Games in Thunder Bay, the population of Thunder Bay was equivalent to PEI. They had one athlete from that city at those games and we had in excess of 200. So when you look at the population of PEI and the fact that we send 200 athletes, and the results that we have, I think it just magnifies the accomplishments of these athletes and all of the rest that participated because they did us really proud.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: Back to work.

The hon. Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs.

Mr. MacFadyen: Point of privilege.

I just want to inform the House of the reception that will be held over at the Confederation Centre this evening at 5:00 p.m.

Chair: Thank you, hon. minister.

Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct) spaces.

Chair: Going back to spaces. Sorry.

Mr. R. Brown: I understand the federal money of \$250 million is only available to companies that do spaces and they get a tax credit on that. So you're saying the \$250 million is an outright grant distributed back to the provinces on a per capita basis. Our grant will be approximately \$1 million that you have not included in the budget?

Mr. Gillan: Correct.

Mr. R. Brown: And you have no plan for that at this time?

Mr. Gillan: The reason because we haven't gotten it yet.

Mr. R. Brown: Is that right? But funny, the minister of energy can put \$15 million in his budget and he never got it yet.

An Hon. Member: He got it.

Mr. R. Brown: No he never got the cheque yet. But anyway, there is some put it in and some put it out.

Leader of the Opposition: That's why it's called the 'fudge-it budget.'

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Housing Programs. "Appropriations provided for the operation of social housing programs, which promote suitable and affordable housing for seniors and families as well as capital debt payments related to housing facilities owned by the Housing Corporation." Administration: 932,200. Debt: 2,793,100. Equipment: 36,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,205,400. Professional and Contract Services: 277,000. Salaries: 864,200. Travel and Training: 84,800. Grants: 1,951,800. Total Housing Programs: 9,145,200.

Question, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Kings Square.

Mr. R. Brown: What housing program is this? What in particular?

Mr. Gillan: This is both the housing trust fund and the affordable housing trust and it covers a multitude of - for instance, it handles the senior citizens' housing units spread across the province, 100 of those.

Mr. R. Brown: Eleven hundred units?

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay.

Mr. Gillan: Eleven hundred and fifty eight, actually, in 37 different communities.

Mr. R. Brown: Yeah. That's the senior units, any other units?

Mr. Gillan: We do have social housing as well that covers rural and native housing. As I indicated, it covers both the Canada-PEI Affordable Housing Program, phase one and phase two.

Mr. R. Brown: So where's the grant money that goes to the PEI Housing Corporation?

Lorne Clow Director: The housing

corporation is a separate budget.

Mr. R. Brown: Separate budget?

Lorne Clow Director: Yes, it's a corporation. It's not reflective in this.

Mr. R. Brown: Appropriation from the Province of Prince Edward Island. This is in your public accounts book for 2006, \$3.7 million. That money has to be appropriated so where is it appropriated?

Lorne Clow Director: What you would see, what the housing corporation would be responsible for, would be mostly debt. The line there on debt. That's essentially -

Mr. R. Brown: So the 2.7 million is that appropriation?

Lorne Clow Director: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: So does the housing corporation do the maintenance and do they handle all the projects? I'm just trying to figure out here, because I have a statement here from the PEI Housing Corporation. It doesn't show any revenue in terms of rents or stuff like that. It just shows 3.7 million appropriation from government, and you're saying under housing the debt payment is out of appropriation.

Lorne Clow Director: What the housing corporation is really responsible for is the collection of rent, and the rent dollars would come into general government revenue.

Mr. R. Brown: Yes. In front there. In public accounts there's rent. So that's the rent for the housing corporation.

Lorne Clow Director: And you're thinking of maintenance. The maintenance would be responsible for the seniors units. So the housing corporation doesn't have any staff, but the housing division does have staff that

would look after the maintenance for the senior housing units.

Mr. R. Brown: It has staff here. It says housing programs, salaries, 684,000.

Lorne Clow Director: Yes. That would be staff that would do the assessment for individuals that are looking to go into senior housing and family housing.

Mr. R. Brown: I'm just trying to figure out how the money - so you're saying when somebody up at social housing or subsidy housing in the City of Charlottetown, when they pay the rent it goes into general revenues, the government and then you guys take the general revenues and distribute it back out through the Crown corp.

Lorne Clow Director: I guess that's perhaps what government does.

We had the amount there for the debt. Really, that's the only dollars that the housing corporation would - it's the only expenses that they would have is the debt expenses. Because there is no staff, it's just the debt that they are paying and it's just the reflection of the revenue which is done by housing. The salaries of these individuals here, some of them would collect.

Mr. R. Brown: So under grants, you're up 1.4 million and that's out of Bill C-48 money?

Mr. Gillan: That's on the RAP program, the rehabilitation program, and it's the rent supplement that you have been talking about and the affordable housing. So it's those three areas.

Mr. R. Brown: So what are you going to do with the 1.9 million?

Mr. Gillan: It is then going to be distributed.

Mr. R. Brown: How is it going to be distributed?

Mr. Gillan: One of the areas will be to take a look at the renovation and the modernization of these programs, as you can appreciate. A number of them have been there for quite some time. Renovations are necessary, so part of the dollars will be going there.

Mr. R. Brown: Under the Auditor General's report he indicated that there was a study done - you asked him to look into the manors -, but they said there was a desperate need for more subsidized housing in Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Gillan: There is.

Mr. R. Brown: Can we get a copy of that report? My constituents are asking me, although some of your backbenchers will be getting up and talking about affordable housing. Well, there's a lot of people in my constituency that can't even afford affordable housing. They don't even make enough to afford affordable housing.

Mr. Gillan: Right.

Mr. R. Brown: There's a tremendous need in this province for more subsidized housing. There hasn't been a stick of this type of housing built since you guys came into power. Give me a list of how much housing has been built in that (Indistinct).

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: No, it isn't. I have to explain it to them. I have to get up and explain it to them, the difference between social housing and affordable housing.

Zakem Housing is affordable housing, okay? It's not subsidized through social services. Affordable housing for people, like

Dresden Court or all the duplexes you see around the city, you go in, you apply for that housing, okay, and it's 25% of your income.

I have people in my constituency paying up to 60 and 70% of their income for housing. That's unacceptable. That is totally unacceptable. It's not under affordable housing. That's not subsidized housing. Now, is it? I want to get this straight with you guys, because you guys think you're doing a tremendous job in social housing on Prince Edward Island. You're not doing a bit for social housing in Prince Edward Island. You're doing a good job with affordable housing, but that's all money coming from Ottawa. The only money you've really spent in affordable housing on Prince Edward Island is transfers from the federal government. That's all you've ever given.

Zakem House was given close to a million dollars, but that was all federal money through housing programs. Okay? There's no money available for subsidized housing.

Mr. Gillan: That's not correct, hon. member.

One of the areas last year that we did provide dollars and relief in social housing was for the seniors, and I'm sure that you'll remember that we were able to reduce the seniors' rent from 30% down to 25. That certainly was a great improvement. We saved seniors nearly \$700,000. So when you say not a thing was done, I think \$700,000 is a considerable fee, hon. member.

There are areas that, yes, it is definitely needed. We realize that and having sat at the federal meetings with the other housing ministers, they also are in need of housing right across the country. I think you know Aboriginal housing is certainly uppermost in their mind, but we do continuously need the partnership of the federal government as

well. We're looking through our various programs to be able to prove what you are suggesting.

Mr. R. Brown: Minister, you didn't say how much social housing was built. That indicates none was built. Do you think it's acceptable for a family, two kids and a mother, paying 60% of their income towards housing costs? Do you think that's acceptable in this Province of Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Gillan: Well, it is, because what we have -

Mr. R. Brown: It's acceptable.

Mr. Gillan: And a little bit later on - I'm looking for a table here that I do have which points out that Prince Edward Island, that we are able to provide for those families in needs for both a single individual, single parent and also for two spouses and two children, that we lead the nation, hon. member. When you stand up and you say that we're not doing anything -

Mr. R. Brown: How much does that person get?

Mr. Gillan: - is a disservice to this government.

Mr. R. Brown: How much does that person get? I ask how much does he get. You're spinning there.

Chair: Let him finish (Indistinct) question. (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: Yes, good. He's not getting away with the spin. Single parent, two kids, how much do they get in social assistance? What's the rent ceiling? Let's go right through it. I know it right down pat. What's the rent ceiling? You're spinning this. It's the people in need of Prince Edward Island -

Mr. Gillan: You're the one that stood up to make statements, hon. member.

Mr. R. Brown: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Gillan: Now me just tell you -

Mr. R. Brown: And you're not going to get away with it. Let's see -

Mr. Gillan: Let me just tell you.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay, what's the housing costs?

Mr. Gillan: You had your chance to talk.

Chair: Hon. member, ask a question and wait for the answer.

Mr. R. Brown: Good.

Chair: You won't have the privilege to (Indistinct) the question.

Mr. Gillan: Under single employable individuals, hon. member, the current rate is \$300.

Mr. R. Brown: Three hundred dollars that person has to live on.

Mr. Gillan: We have raised that in one year to \$309.

Mr. R. Brown: Ooh boy.

Mr. Gillan: Now just a moment. Single last year was 467, that has gone up now to 481. As I said, those are - I don't think we lead the nation in those. But we're up very high. For two persons last year the rate was 592, this year it is 610. For three persons it has gone up to 697 - there's an increase - and for four persons, and this is the highest in all of the country, it has gone from 742 to 763.

So we are realizing that there is a need out

and we are responding.

Mr. R. Brown: Minister, most other provinces have a top-up program for the National Child Benefit. We're one of the very few provinces that claw back the National Child Benefit. I know you're not going to admit to it.

Mr. Gillan: No, we're not.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay.

An Hon. Member: Well, that's not true.

Mr. R. Brown: That's not true.

Mr. Gillan: It is true.

Leader of the Opposition: Even I'll stand up and say (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: So what your saying then, that member from Morell who sat on the national welfare league who said that your clawing back the National Child Benefit, that member was wrong when those reports were being -

Mr. Gillan: What we are saying is that the dollars are invested for the benefits of the individual who need them and we can demonstrate, as we will a little bit later on exactly how they have grown over the years and that they are of benefit to those who need them.

Leader of the Opposition: Taking it away, though.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay. Food and clothing, how much are you paying for that two-member family, two-person family, three-person family? Adult with two children.

Mr. Gillan: Food.

Mr. R. Brown: And how much did that go up?

Mr. Gillan: Under personal comfort I have a number of them here. It has stayed steady at 43, room and board is now at 448, clothing is still at 24, home repair is still at 25, funerals last year - you probably remember - went from 2,000 to 2,500. The kilometre rate for transportation remains at 20 cents and that was up last year, and the community care - we talked about that. Which is at \$49.

Mr. R. Brown: I'm asking for the family of two. Two children, one parent. So it's \$43 a person. How much does each kid get? Twenty-one dollars?

Mr. Gillan: It would be in - the food would be in the \$55.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay.

Mr. Gillan: The healthy child allowance. It has increased by \$57 since back in 2002. So there has been increases throughout.

So what we have done, hon. member, as you well know, is that we take a look at where the need is the greatest and we do on a regular basis - in fact, it's a yearly basis - which of these categories needs to be increased and that's what we do. Not all categories of course are increased every year.

Mr. R. Brown: But do you see my point? You're saying we're the best in the country.

Mr. Gillan: No, I said we were the best in the country now as far as the rent was concerned.

Mr. R. Brown: But you understand you clawed back the national child - and I'm talking strictly on people on social assistance here, okay.

Mr. Gillan: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: Which you have a large amount of people and it is being decreased, but the problem with it is as we're decreasing the numbers, which I think is good for Prince Edward Island, but what we're doing is getting into the long-term people that are on social assistance and these are continuing faces.

So you claw back their GST. I know you're going to say no, because it goes somewhere else, but you clawed back from them. Other provinces have a top up program similar to the National Child Benefit. I understand Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and several other provinces, what they do is send out a cheque on top of the National Child Benefit. We don't have that. So you have to net that out of our social cost.

Mr. Gillan: As you say, we're not going to have an agreement on that, because in using the dollars into other areas - and I think we can demonstrate, particularly under the healthy child allowance, that over the years it has grown to provide those families and those children with the opportunity that we think they do need. You're saying that other provinces do it differently.

There are a number of provinces, however, that do follow the same program or the same methodology that we do, and I imagine, of course I know you know this, is that it was only two provinces in the beginning, New Brunswick and Manitoba, who did not adjust the National Child Benefit.

Whether or not they're better off now, it's very debatable, and I have certainly read some of the materials which indicate that they are not up to where the other provinces are.

Mr. R. Brown: So do we have any money to improve - the auditor's report concerning

- he came back and said there was a need for it and I don't see it being addressed.

I know you introduced a manor replacement program, but the auditor has indicated the report that you received said: Look, we do have a problem, but our greater problem is in subsidized housing for the most vulnerable people on Prince Edward Island. I'm just wondering I don't see any plan in here for that. Do you have any plan to build anymore or is that it?

Mr. Gillan: No, I think what we are able to do - and it has proved that it is working - is to use the - again, you don't want to use the other affordable agreement, but the affordable agreement has worked with us. You mentioned the Zakem House, that was one of them. As you well know, because you had been in attendance at most of those - I just don't see it right in front of me, the list of the others - but working with the private sector has been a very good move, hon. member.

Social assistance, we watch their rates, we talked about that. Seniors, again, we are fixing up the units, those 1,167 units that I had mentioned. We have our eye on those, and we're picking them off one after the other. So I think that we are able to claim that we are certainly making moves in those areas.

Mr. R. Brown: Okay, Mr. Minister. Let's put it (Indistinct) We haven't built a stick of subsidized housing. Do you have a program that will help people in terms of if they can't get into social housing or into our subsidized housing? Do we have money set aside that says: Okay, you can't get into it, but we'll subsidize you down to 25% per cent of your salary in that private dwelling, or in that private sector place?

Mr. Gillan: Yes, I know what you're saying. In fact, there were a couple of

programs which we used to have and they were mortgages that the government took out on behalf of individuals. We don't have those now. They just didn't meet with participation on a province-wide basis.

So, other than the programs that I have mentioned for the seniors, for the social assistance, for the others, and working with the private sector, those are the ones, hon. member. You may say: That's not enough. What it is, it represents a considerable amount of provincial dollars and we try to be fair and distribute that as equally as we possibly can.

Mr. R. Brown: So when somebody at a door says to me they can't afford housing, or they're spending 60% of their income on housing, and they say - and yet you got \$8 million for Cow's Ice Cream, you're giving millions of dollars of tax credits to various companies. I just tell that person they're more willing to get the money than you are?

Mr. Gillan: No. Of course, you can reach out and say anything. The next example that you'll say, well, if there's a golf course that was to be sold you could put that into housing, or such as that.

Mr. R. Brown: Oh, I'd do that right away. No problem with that.

Mr. Gillan: As I say, there's lots of examples that you can use.

Mr. R. Brown: I'd do that tomorrow. I believe social housing is more important than golf courses.

Mr. Gillan: We can also point to examples that we are using, and I did mention the Zakem House. We have other - Habitat for Humanity has been very good. I think again that you're knowledgeable of that. In Wellington we have been able to do renovations in Wellington, McQuaid

Buildings, PRM Holdings, CMHA, Lifebridge Incorporated. So there have been successes out there recently.

So to think, hon. member, that we have stopped and we're not making any advances in any of those sectors is not correct. There is lots of housing, but we're also doing a lot of good out there, working with the various partners, and that is from private right on up to federal.

Mr. R. Brown: So I have a constituent working for eight bucks an hour, and that person can't get into subsidized housing because it's full. Is there a program that that person can go to? Do we have a program in place that says: We have no social housing available, you do qualify for social housing, you do qualify for social housing but we have none available. While we have none available, we'll give you the money to subsidize you down in your other housing.

Mr. Gillan: That's the difficulty, because being the payer of last resort we can't reach out and say here are the dollars for everybody and under every instance.

We try to be able to do what is necessary for those who need it through financial assistance. I think that you will agree, and you did mention that the caseload is coming down. We're now around the 3,500 level, and that is certainly an improvement. It's a reflection, of course, of the economy, it has come down from nearly 5,000 to that. Hopefully, society will be able to keep it down.

But to be able to say, with a blanket statement, to everybody that comes, is there an opportunity to help every individual? We would like to think that we have, but we're working on the sectors that I have mentioned, and we're doing what we possibly can.

Mr. R. Brown: So -

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Just a couple of quick things.

One, I want to congratulate the hon. Member from District 12, he did fight long and hard to get the reduction from the 30% down to the 25. The government did implement it, but I know the hon. member from District 12 has lobbied for that for a long time. Any pamphlet he's put out, anything he's done, any caucus meeting, anytime, he's been a strong advocate for that.

I've raised this I think with the minister last year, get into one of the seniors complexes where you pay 25% of the rate. What is the criteria? Is there an age limit? As you know, I've encountered some telephone calls, as I'm sure you are, where because we have a lack of subsidized housing here on Prince Edward Island that there are people getting into the seniors' homes that might be of different demographics and different lifestyles.

For example, not that it's a bad thing, but sometimes seniors, when they move into some of these seniors homes, they expect that it be quiet. That after 9 or 10:00 p.m. at night there is not going to be noise. Some people come in, they might have children, they might have people that go out to the bars that are staying with them, and things along those lines. I've heard some major complaints along those lines. I think the result of it or the origin of it comes from the hon. member from District 12's point, that in terms of subsidized housing we've had a lack of it. What government has been doing is they've been overcompensating it perhaps with some of our seniors housing. Can you give me an update on those issues?

Mr. Gillan: I don't think very much, hon. member, has changed since last year. Through the assessment process, we do try to again have only those individuals who are age 60 and over - it is age and over. I don't think that the percentage of those individuals have grown, but all that we have to do, of course, is to have one or two cause a disturbance that you have mentioned and then it makes an uneasiness in the building.

I am aware of that. I get the similar phone calls. But I don't think that there has been any increase from last year, but there are still individuals out there who -

Leader of the Opposition: So how did they get in if there is an age limit of 60?

Lorne Clow Director: Are you suggesting, hon. member, is it for under 60 you're saying that somebody gets in?

Leader of the Opposition: I'm just saying, you have different lifestyles. The minister I think, unless I heard it wrong, he said the age limit to get into the subsidized seniors homes is 60.

Lorne Clow Director: If you have an 85 year old that's active and that, I mean that's a big range of age certainly. It could be 25 years.

Leader of the Opposition: Are there people in there under the age of 60, though?

Lorne Clow Director: You might find that in the rural areas where is not a great need for seniors' housing. We do have some buildings that there may be vacancies and there is pressure for social housing and perhaps where there is - we may have to have an individual (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: I noticed a big difference between some of the rural (Indistinct) and the urban is, like if you go

up west or down east you will find that they're separate units almost. Do you know what I mean? Then here in Charlottetown - that's more acceptable, but here in Charlottetown it's more like an apartment building complex.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m.

Lorne Clow Director: Yeah, that's correct.

Mr. Collins: Call the hour.

Chair: Can we carry this last section?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Gillan: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Speaker take the Chair, and that the Chairman report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Chair: Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of a Committee of the Whole House having under consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the Committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Dunn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member from Charlottetown-Spring Park, that this House adjourn and stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

