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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



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Speaker: Hon. Kathleen M. Casey

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker's Remarks

Speaker: Hon. members, as you know, during proceedings last night, there was a tied vote on the motion for third reading of Bill No. 100.

Rule 43 of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island provides that in such circumstances, "When there is an equality of votes upon a division, the Speaker shall cast the deciding vote and any reasons stated by the Speaker shall be entered in the daily journal."

In voting in favour of the motion last night, hon. members, I did not offer any reasons for why I voted in the manner I did, but I wish to do so now. I refer all hon. members to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, 2009, page 316, which states as follows:

"In theory, the Speaker has the same freedom as any other Member to vote in accordance with his or her conscience; however, the exercise of this responsibility could involve the Speaker in partisan debate, which would adversely affect the confidence of the House in his or her impartiality. Therefore, certain conventions have developed as a guide to Speakers (and Chairs in a Committee of the Whole) in the infrequent exercise of the casting vote. Concisely put, the Speaker normally votes to maintain the *status quo*."

In the case of Bill 100, the debate was not a partisan debate. The matter before the House was a private member's initiative and hon. members, without partisan considerations, expressed opinion and voted according to their conscience on the floor of this chamber. As your Speaker, I did the same. I voted my conscience.

As noted, and due to the circumstances, it became my responsibility to cast the deciding vote and because voting either way could not reasonably be interpreted to involve the Speaker in partisan debate - as there was none - or undermine your confidence in the chair, I voted my conscience.

I appreciate your indulgence in permitting me the opportunity to clarify this matter as your Speaker.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to the gallery.

Spécialement les neuvième et dixième année, des étudiants qui viennent de l'École Pierre-Chiasson et leur professeur, Angela Williams. Bienvenue à l'Assemblée aujourd'hui.

Especially grades 9 and 10 students from École Pierre-Chiasson and their teacher, Angela Williams. Welcome to the Assembly today.

I also had the opportunity earlier today to go to an open house for Nature's Crops International, which is doing great work here in Prince Edward Island, especially now for our agriculture community in finding new crops, especially to work into our crop rotation here in the province. I want to wish them all the best.

To all those watching on EastLink channel 10, I wish everyone a very safe and happy day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to rise and welcome all our guests today. We have Kenneth Murnaghan and a number of regular people with us.

The Page, Sarah, who's with us from Tignish, her school's actually with us today, so we want to say hello to them. As well, I see John Morris up there as well.

I also want to say hello to people that watch us at home, especially Irene and Mary and Helen in Summerside and Roma in Tignish. I hope everybody has a wonderful day.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

Mr. D. Currie: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I rise to welcome all guests in the gallery and students from our public education system. Certainly want to acknowledge Kenny Murnaghan, who is a huge advocate for individuals with brain injury and has done some great work over the last few years in the province, and continues to advocate and does a great job advocating all ministers in government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development.

Mr. LeClair: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, want to get up and welcome everyone to the gallery, especially Angela Williams and her classes, I guess, students from grades 7 to 11. It's great to see you here from our École Pierre Chiasson school. I know they're there to watch Sarah Arsenault do her work and certainly, hopefully, some of the students will take an interest and maybe want to do this at a later date. So it's great to see you hear from Tignish-Palmer Road.

I would also, while I'm standing, like to wish Henry Perry, a great person from Tignish-Palmer Road, a happy 81st birthday. He's having a birthday today and I just wanted to mention that.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everyone on the gallery and a special welcome, *bienvenue*, to the students of École Pierre Chiasson school.

I'd also like to say hello to everyone back in my District of Evangeline-Miscouche.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would also like to welcome all the students and visitors here today. I can't see. I think it's Angela Williams from Tyne Valley up there, if I'm not mistaken, and if I am, I apologize. I'd like to welcome her here with her students.

Also today, I want to wish a special happy birthday greetings to Isabel Ramsay. She's a resident of Tyne Valley. She's celebrating her 90th birthday today and is now residing in the Stewart Memorial Hospital long-term wing. I know her family are celebrating with her today.

In addition to her, I'd like to send out greetings to all my constituents who are watching on EastLink or on the web live cast.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to rise and welcome everyone in the gallery and especially the youth.

It's great to see them take an interest and watch the proceedings.

Certainly, I would also like to extend best wishes to my wife's uncle, and his name is Lloyd Murray. Lloyd is 94 years old and he's in the hospital this morning for some surgery. I believe that's the first time he's been hospitalized in his life other than going in to visit friends and so on. So I do wish him well in his surgery this morning and hopefully he feels much better soon.

I'd like to extend best wishes to all the folks out watching on EastLink as well, Madam Speaker, and I hope they have a great day.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone in the gallery as well, especially hello to the most frequent of our guests, Mr. Eddie Lund. It's always great to have you here, Eddie, making sure everything's under control.

To all those watching at home, especially at Clinton View Lodge in the wonderful District of Kensington-Malpeque. Someone very special there at Clinton View Lodge. Art and Elva Profit are celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary this weekend. So you can just put that in perspective. Quite a feat.

My old buddy, George MacKay, took a little tumble on the weekend, Madam Speaker, and cracked seven of his ribs and I'm hoping that he's, today, feeling much better than he was Monday when I was in to visit.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche and the Government House Leader.

Evangeline Rec Centre volunteers

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is with great pride that I have the chance to rise today in the House to recognize some very dedicated volunteers in my district and in the surrounding communities. As you all know, the Evangeline region suffered a big loss. The Evangeline Rec Centre served as one of the pillars of our community, whether it was hockey, figure skating or the Sunday family skate. We all have our own memories of the rink.

Since the day we lost our rink the community has rallied to ensure our youth and our community have a rink for the next

hockey season. The Evangeline Rink Fundraising committee is comprised of incredible individuals with a passion for their community. They have, and continue, to work tirelessly to make sure that their kids and the generations to come will have the rink to play hockey when the next fall comes around.

The community is known as showing extreme generosity, and proved once again that when we all work together with the same objective we can accomplish anything.

I also want to commend the surrounding communities for all their support. They have been more than good neighbours. They're not even from our community, yet they provide us with volunteers, time and equipment for different fundraisers and are always ready to help.

To the Evangeline Rec Centre Rebuilding Committee and the fund raising committee, I want to commend you, and thank you for all your hard work. You have certainly made our community and our Island proud.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

RCMP Chief Superintendent Tracy Hardy

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Recently the RCMP on PEI welcomed a new commanding officer to their ranks. Chief Superintendent Tracy Hardy officially assumed command from Randy Robar on July 23rd, 2010 at a ceremony held at the HMCS Queen Charlotte. Chief Superintendent Hardy comes to PEI from Vancouver, BC where she was a planning

officer with the Integrated Security Unit of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Since the age of 12 when she first learned that the RCMP was accepting female applicants, Chief Superintendent Hardy felt the desire to join the RCMP and a short seven years later she was off to Regina Depot Division, the training academy, to begin her career.

Since joining in 1981 she has seen about a dozen different transfers that has taken her from Saskatchewan to the Northwest Territories and to her home province of BC. A strong influence in her life to join the Mounties was an officer that served as a role model to students in her high school. This is very true because that happened to me also. This officer was very involved in various activities with the school. It was as if by being involved with the students' activities that he was keeping an eye on them. It was this example that allowed Chief Superintendent Hardy to see that policing and community involvement go hand in hand.

It is something that she has lived by over the span of her career. She has given back to the community in so many ways. Whether through teaching cross-country skiing, various school programs such as DARE, assisting with the construction of Habitat for Humanity homes and has worked with children at high risk with horseback riding, Chief Superintendent Hardy has been involved in the communities she helps police.

One of the commitments she has maintained throughout her career has been the enforcement of impaired driving laws. Her personal experience of losing her best friend at the tender age of 17 at the hands of a drunk driver has made a lasting impression. Another focus for her has been helping find better ways to deal with domestic violence.

She became very familiar with this issue when she was posted in Rankin Inlet where domestic violence was common.

As a former RCMP member, and on behalf of my colleagues in the Legislature, I want to welcome Chief Superintendent Tracey Hardy to PEI and wish her all the best in her latest post as “L” Division’s first female commanding officer.

I congratulate her.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Ferry funding

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today and congratulate the Hon. Gail Shea, hon. Peter MacKay, hon. Chuck Strahl, Premier of Nova Scotia, all the colleagues in this House, Thom MacMillan and Lawrence MacAulay for working together to secure funding for the very vital Wood Islands ferry.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

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

Blacklisting of company (further)

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yesterday, the question from the member from Georgetown re: the Energy Efficiency

Office, and it was a good question, I may say.

The PEI Office of Energy Efficiency does not recommend companies. In fact, we are criticized for not having a list of recommended contractors. The only companies we have a relationship with are the energy audit companies. The contracts stipulate they are forbidden to recommend specific companies to clients.

The PEI Energy Efficiency Program was developed in 2008 using the federal ecoENERGY program under the Natural Resources Canada. We still use those regulations today, even though the federal program has been cut. We provide financial assistance for the required NRCan ecoENERGY audits and additional loans and grants for work carried out under the program. The standards are all performance based: Minimum R-value, efficiency rating, Energy Star certification. For windows, the minimum requirement is Energy Star certified from climate zone B.

When we first started our grant program in 2008, Thermotech Windows did not have the Energy Star certification. In the spring of 2009 they received the Energy Star certification for a number of their products and we have been approving their windows since that time. The Office of Energy Efficiency has approved at least six applications for Thermotech Windows in 2010 and at least five applications in 2009. There may be more.

I can’t give you a more accurate answer because the Office of Energy Efficiency only records receipts from the client. If the client deals with Thermotech directly we record that. If the client deals through a contractor, we do not record it.

Thank you very much, and I’ll table some information. (Indistinct) they find it, Madam

Speaker, they can get back to me.

Tyne Valley windows (further)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Mr. MacKinley: Madam Speaker, referring back to the question: Do we tender windows installed?

The answer basically is no in our department, except there might be one small window somewhere. You might be inviting bids for four or five contractors to put a window in if we don't have time to do it ourselves. Windows are a part of a contract, completed by a general contractor who purchased the windows from suppliers. We included his windows, from out my way - because I'd love to get a lot of tenders if he could, he's in my riding - from approved, his products were approved for Colville Manor and Maplewood Manor. However, the contractors for Colville Manor and Maplewood Manor who came in with the lowest bids did not choose his windows. We can't start dictating who they got to buy the windows.

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Cattle inventory

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question's to the minister of agriculture.

Mr. Minister, this government has developed a reputation in the agriculture community, a reputation of turning its back on one of our most important sectors. My question is to the minister of agriculture. What is the inventory of cattle in this province today?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we certainly take all sectors of the agricultural community as very important to a sustainable sustainability of rural PEI.

I don't know the actual number of particular livestock on PEI today. Certainly it's changing by the day and by the week, without question.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In 2007 we had 85,000 head of cattle, in 2009 we were down to 72,000 head and in 2010 we're down again.

An Hon. Member: To what?

Mr. Bagnall: Mr. Minister, why has this minister let the beef industry down?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, there are fairly challenging times across North America for beef production and profitability in beef.

When this government was elected we had major challenges with the beef plant and returns, which reflected on the primary industry and the beef producers as well. We've worked very hard to sustain it. Now yes, we did receive a slide, if you like, in production and that was because of several reasons. But we believe we've got sustainability now and we don't anticipate any further declines in the production of beef on Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Hog inventory

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This minister has done nothing for the beef industry in this province. He's been there, and the only sector that he's trying to help is the potato sector, which he belongs to himself. But he has done nothing for the beef industry in this province. He talks about putting some money into the beef plant, yes, and needily so. But we also have to help our beef producers or they're not going to survive and he's failed in that position.

Minister, how many hogs do we have in PEI now?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we have an annual production of hogs on Prince Edward Island now of about 97,000.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

State of hog industry

Mr. Bagnall: I don't know where he's getting his numbers from, Madam Speaker.

Because in 2007, we were at 123,000 and my information we're getting, we're down to about 43,000 hogs in 2009. Before this government took over, we had 100 hog farmers. Today we have 27 hog farmers and only nine of them are producing the majority of the hogs. To the minister: Why has this government let the hog industry down?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, there's been some challenges on a global basis with hog production, certainly in Canada.

A number of years ago there was 32 million hogs produced in Canada and now the market can only require 25 million hogs per annum. The huge production is in western Canada. What that's done, that overproduction has put a downward pressure on the market price and there hasn't been profits in the hog industry. We are carrying on with our transportation subsidy and other incentives within the hog industry to sustain what we have. The figure that's been reported to me is just under 100,000 hogs produced on an annual basis. At one time, in the glory years if you like, in hog production we were up at close to 200,000 hogs. But that has declined. We are trying to maintain and sustain that number where we are at the moment.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We all remember when this Premier drew a line in the sand with the hog industry. We all remember that dark day when he pulled the plug on the hog plant. The hog plant was into the second year of a five-year plan which would help turn around the industry. Minister, do you regret the decision of pulling the plug on the hog plant in this province?

Some Hon. Members: We didn't have a hog plant.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

An Hon. Member: Quebec had a hog plant.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, the former minister of agriculture left some level of

uncertainty in all aspects of the industry and we've had to come in and pick up the pieces, if you like.

There was some interest within the hog plant that was formerly based in Quebec. We all know what the Auditor General said with that. We were putting money in the front door and it was disappearing out the back door as per the report from the Auditor General.

Obviously we want to maintain the hog industry that we have at the level we have. Our hogs are going to Nova Scotia at the present time, and Quebec, and we believe what we have now is sustainable over the long run, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Beef and hog industries

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I knew there was a problem with the previous minister. That's why they replaced him and put you in there when they did it. So hurting agriculture was this government's first assault on rural PEI when they came into government. I believe the headlines from the first year in government was a crisis in agriculture was the news story of the year.

Where was this government, and why didn't they sit down and discuss it? Minister, what would you have done differently in your first year or two with your government short rein on the hog and beef industry? What would you have done differently?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, to have a successful primary industry you have to produce what the customer wants, and you have to produce it at the level that the

market can actually support.

If a commodity is out there and it's in an overproduction situation and it's trying to put 25 or 30% more hogs or animals into a market, then you're going to receive a low price. That's what's happened. What we're trying to do now as a government is trying to align the supply to what we anticipate the market will need. If you get into an overproduction situation in a market, an industry is in an overproduction situation, down goes the price. That doesn't provide an economically sustainable situation. So what we're trying to do is align those two things.

We know we can only produce what the market can sell, and at the levels that the market can sell, and that's where we strive to go. We believe that our industries are starting to get sustainable now, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: It's easy to see how he's trying to get them in line, Madam Speaker.

He's trying to shut down the beef industry. He shut down the pork industry. There's not much wonder. You see the problem with this government, they won't admit to it when they make mistakes. We saw another example of that this last week when the Premier backtracked on his degree granting legislation. Once he realized he made a mistake he wouldn't admit it. He tried to back out of it. That's the history of this government.

A couple of years ago there was a rally in front of this provincial House. It was called May Day to try to show government just how serious the industry was. Minister, what

have you done since May Day to help the agriculture industry? Nothing.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, my department has a budget of about \$30 million.

About half of that per year goes into programming for producers in all sectors across the Island. We need to streamline our industries, we need to be efficient, we need to produce crops and livestock at the levels that the market will absorb and that's what we are trying to do. There's a lot of outside forces. The livestock production in the United States has been, a number of years ago, extremely high, and that puts pressure on the Canadian system. You can't put more animals into a market, or more product into a market, than the market will bear or you take a lower price. That's really what's been happening.

So we've been working very hard on our programming, everything from our Agricultural Insurance Corporation for crops, we've been working with our livestock industry, we've been funding our hog industry and we've been funding our beef industry. Our beef plant is doing significantly better than it was when that minister with the former government left office. There were some major challenges with the beef plant. We couldn't believe when we got in there and had a look at the situation.

We are making improvements, we are streamlining, and we will turn that business around, but it is tough, in tough economic times, and we know that. We're working very hard with our producers to make that happen, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from

Montague-Kilmuir.

Opposition requests re: agriculture

Mr. Bagnall: Just what I thought, Madam Speaker, he's done nothing.

You've done nothing since you've been there to help the industry. Nothing to help the hog industry. Nothing to help the beef industry. Opposition held a non-partisan press conference that year to show Islanders how agriculture affected all aspects of Island life. Minister, we made six solid requests on behalf of the agricultural industry. Government said they would look at them. Minister, can you tell me today, have you acted on any of them?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we work diligently on improvements to the industry.

We work in cooperation with the industry. We've had meetings very recently with the research station to make sure that our federal organization and federal counterparts are addressing the issues of today. If we have a pest problem or we have a disease problem that we have challenges with, we work closely with them. We work closely with the potato board. We're working with the Pack Your Appetite advertising campaign for potato products. We're working with the grain elevator corporation. We put in a new dryer there. We're trying to establish new crops to be grown on Prince Edward Island. We're trying to extract new substances from crops. We've got Nature's Crop International this morning that had an official opening, an announcement to make.

So we're trying to diversify agriculture. To have all your eggs in one basket just doesn't cut it today, so we have to broaden our horizons. We have to work with the

community, we have to come up with other crops that we can grow that fit the rotation year, and we have to do all of that while we're protecting the environment and preserving our natural capital of soil, water and air. When we pull all those things together that's where we need our vision, and I think we've shown that vision and we're going forward to reach those goals, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's not surprising that the minister didn't know what the press conference was about. It's not (Indistinct) that he didn't act on it, but these were industry-driven ideas and they were serious about it. This minister has done nothing to help the industry in those things. He's done nothing.

He talked a few minutes ago about all the great things he was doing. They were all potato initiatives, which is what I've said, he's the minister of potatoes in this province, not the minister of agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Support for agriculture

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, the problem is here, this government doesn't care.

Minister, when are you going to start acting rather than talking?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we will continue with a vision of agriculture and what agriculture should be.

Without question, the last two or three years,

and certainly the next decade, agriculture is going to be in transition here in Prince Edward Island. It is going to change from what it was. We have to have diversity in agriculture. We have to have other crops in agriculture. If you do something for five years or you produce a product in a certain way for five years, and you haven't made any money, wouldn't it be time to ask questions, and say: I haven't made any money doing this for five years, why would I continue to do it?

Now let's find a better way to do it. Let's find another market. Let's find a lower cost of production. Let's do it differently so that there are profits at the end of the day. If your industry is not economically profitable and viable at the end of the day, should we keep pouring money in and subsidizing something for 10, 20, 30 years? I don't think it makes sense.

So let's work with this vision, let's work with the sectors of the industry, and try to find that profitability. That's exactly what they're doing. To say we've done nothing is a really very negative, ridiculous statement. We have done an enormous lot. We're picking up the pieces. We've taken the losses from the beef plant from exorbitant rates under that minister over there, that former minister and that former government, and moved it down fairly close to break even.

Have we got a ways to go? We sure do. But we're getting there. We've got the right staff in place and we're growing that industry, and we're trying to find that space in the marketplace that we need that will bring the profits that we need to have.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I cannot believe that this minister just stood up in this House and said he wasn't prepared to put money into the agriculture industry, that they've been bleeding him dry and the time has come that we don't give them any more money.

Minister, you're supposed to be standing up for the agricultural industry in this province, not washing your hands of them! Minister, when are you going to take control and support the agricultural industry in this province?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

An Hon. Member: Listen again.

Speaker: The hon. Minister - order, please!

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we've invested a lot of money in the agricultural industry and we've invested in the sectors that need help, and that's a lot of the sectors.

Do we have more money to put in there? Challenging. We've got a lot of money from federal program that we cost-share 60-40 and we've put the dollars in place to turn these industries around and these sectors around. There was a lot of neglect for 10 years prior to this government coming into office. It takes time to turn that around. But that's what we're doing. We are making improvements and we will have sustainable industries here in the years to come.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: We may have sustainable industry in the years to come, Madam

Speaker, but probably not under this minister because he already said a minute ago he was washing his hands, enough's enough, and he's not going to give them any more money.

That's shameful for the minister of agriculture to be talking like this in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, this government's so-called prosperity plan had four strategic sectors.

In this entire sector the word of agriculture is not mentioned once, not once.

Minister, did you even stand up and fight for agriculture to have it put in to one of the four strategic sectors in this province? No you didn't, minister. Why wouldn't you, minister? Why wouldn't you, as minister of agriculture, stand up for the agricultural industry in this province? Why wouldn't you do that?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Obviously, I guess, the Member from Montague-Kilmuir wasn't paying attention earlier in the session today. I think the hon. Premier mentioned the fact that he came back from Kensington today from visiting Nature's Crops International. I can assure the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir that the investment in the Island prosperity strategy is directly tied to our primary industries. There are significant investments and projects related to mussels, lobster, potatoes, soybeans, grains. The hon. Leader of the Opposition yesterday mentioned a number of great researchers who are

working at Atlantic vet college and the University of Prince Edward Island.

We're very proud of our primary industries here on Prince Edward Island and we go to great efforts to make sure that as we move forward in diversifying our economy that it's directly tied to our primary industries in this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, the minister of agriculture has no interest in the agriculture other than the potatoes, and everybody knows that.

The prosperity plan of this government is a blue print, it's obvious that they think they can win the next election. Do you think you can win the next election, minister, ignoring the agricultural industry like you've been doing? Do you think you can win it, minister?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we're not ignoring the agricultural industry.

We're working very hard to turn the agriculture industry around. We're putting millions and millions of dollars in the agricultural industry in all sectors. We've done all kinds with regards to beef, we've done all kinds with pork, we've got 40,000 acres of soybeans growing on PEI, we've got cranbe growing, we've got perilla. We've got diversity in agriculture that we need to go forward to build a framework.

If you're producing that no customer wants to buy and pay for it, why would you keep producing it? So there's diversity. We need

to go forward and we have done that with regards to agriculture, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, he talks about the cranbe and the harvest.

We had a presentation to our standing committee on agriculture, and one of the people that are growing that crop for you says that he can't make any money on it and he has to evaluate whether to even grow it again next year because the new crop you can't make any money on. So exploring crops that you can't make money on, that's very good, Mr. Minister.

This side of the House, I can guarantee you, we won't let agriculture down. We will support the industry and we will support agriculture. You have turned your back on it, minister.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, when you are at the Cabinet table, do you even bring up agriculture at the Cabinet table or do you just stand back and let the rest of the ministers run all over top of you?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, when the former minister of agriculture in the opposition was running the beef plant and responsible for Atlantic Beef Products, he lost \$7 million in one year.

When he was running the hog plant, he put an identity in there from Quebec, and some Island producers, and there was money leaving the back door of that organization.

He put nothing in the potato industry, and he has the audacity to stand there and say that we have not done things for agriculture. Absolutely that former minister is wrong. We've done a lot for agriculture.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: This minister has a great thing in standing up and quoting numbers.

Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Bagnall: I mean, anyone can cut the losses in the beef plant when you cut down the production by two-thirds. Sure, you're going to have less losses. But you're still losing money even after you do that.

So, minister, don't talk about your record. The beef plant has been bleeding your government since you came in and you know it has. Stand up, and if you want to quote figures, quote your figures for the beef plant, minister.

But anyway, the processors in this province are starting to get very concerned and so is the farming community because the potato industry, now, it seems to be starting to begin in a turmoil, minister, a processing - or operating below capacity.

Minister, have you met with Cavendish Farms and McCains to discuss the long-term plan? We know you haven't done anything else for the rest of agriculture, so have you done this for the potato industry?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we have had discussions with Cavendish Farms.

Their volume or requirements are basically stable. They're holding any reductions that they may have had. Certainly the other identity on PEI has been cutting back their volume. They basically tell us that it's soft markets and it's the fast food industry that is creating that reduction in supply. They've clearly told us that as soon as the American economy recovers and gets a bit more stable and more fluid, they will be ramping up their volume again.

We're at 85,000 acres of potatoes this year and last year and we believe that is maintainable. We're out there trying to assist the potato board with a Pack Your Appetite Campaign last year which we launched, a joint effort in Toronto with tourism and agriculture. First time ever. We did increase our sales last year in Ontario by I think it was 14 or 16%. So we are growing the industries and trying to be stable.

There are challenges. There are challenges from where we sit. We're in a recessionary economy throughout the world and that's creating certain levels of challenges. Lots of industries are shrinking or downsizing and ours is no exception. It's downsized a little. We think we're stable now and we're going to start to grow our industries. That's what good vision in agriculture does, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Federal funding for Northumberland Ferries

Mr. McGeoghegan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the Premier. Residents of Belfast-Murray River have been very concerned about the possibilities that funding to the Northumberland Ferries would be cut. As I'm sure many are aware, the federal government announced the new funding agreement last evening. Can the Premier tell the House what this announcement will mean for my constituents and all Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

First of all, I want to thank the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River for his great work on this file. Like the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters indicated as well, I want to thank all members of this Legislature, Lawrence MacAulay, and, of course, Gail Shea who is the minister now. Our understanding as of today - we're still waiting for more clarification - is it was a \$51 million announcement, but there is \$44.7 million to be divided amongst the three different ferry services.

In order for us to maintain what we had, which is the status quo - and we all saw Minister Gail Shea indicate in this morning's *Guardian* that she believes that the status quo is going to be maintained - that will be a \$20 million investment over the next three years. We have to wait till we get that confirmed. But if what Minister Shea is saying is correct, that the status quo is going to be maintained, that means out of the 44.7 million, 20 million has to be set aside for the three-year deal for the Wood Islands ferry.

If that is in fact put in place, I will be the first person to thank the federal government. Yes, we were looking for more, but that gives us an opportunity to continue working into the future to maintain it for the long

term.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Mr. McGeoghegan: Supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

On November 12th we tabled a motion in this House asking for a 15-year contract to bring stability to the service and also stability for all the local businesses in eastern PEI.

Why did the federal government abandon that idea that was supported by all Islanders in eastern PEI?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I want to again reiterate that yes, it was a 15-year deal that all Islanders were looking. This connection between Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia is something that not only benefits eastern PEI, it benefits our whole province. We will be now working, over the next three years to look for a deal for 15 years or longer.

I just want to point out a couple of serious issues here that the federal government has to make sure that they realize. Two thousand and fourteen is going to be a very important year. It will be the 150th anniversary of the meeting of Confederation here on Prince Edward Island.

But I just want to look at this from a legal matter. From a legal matter, back in 1992, there was a memorandum of agreement for the Northumberland Strait Crossing Project. In it it includes legal acknowledgement that the Wood Islands Caribou service is: one, a distinct and important alternative on its own merit to the fixed link; the fixed crossing in

no way diminishes the importance of this ferry service; and three, the fixed link project proceeded based on the commitments that I just mentioned before.

So that is a legal document between the provincial and federal governments dating back to 1992.

I also want to point out, from a constitutional standpoint, the Government of Canada has a constitutional obligation to maintain continuous communications and service to the mainland. This includes a contingency plan in case of an interruption of service. The Wood Islands-Caribou service is a key feature of the contingency plan for all 12 months of the year. So from a legal perspective and from a constitutional perspective, the federal government is supposed to step up to the plate here.

On a final note, I want to point out that there is a connection in BC where the federal government funds, on a yearly basis, \$27 million for their connection between Vancouver and Vancouver Island. The BC ferries, that deal is actually indexed for inflation into perpetuity.

That is the type of deal that Islanders are looking for, Madam Speaker, and that is the type of deal that the federal government should be committing to for all Prince Edward Islanders into the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors.

Race cards

Mr. Greenan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs. The mayor of the great, small City of Summerside has shared

publicly his pride in Red Shores at Summerside Raceway's new grandstand. He states that the main tenant, Atlantic Lottery, their lease payments to the city and the city's loan to build the facility, that more than offsets the city's payment on that loan. So it is, financially, a good deal for the City of Summerside.

Now with this beautiful new facility in our city, I'm being - along with some other members of this House - lobbied by the racing association as to: How do we get more race cards at Summerside Raceway? So I ask the minister if he can please inform the House how our two facilities here on Prince Edward Island, those race cards are determined?

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to begin by tipping my cap to Mayor Basil and his council for continuing to work hard for their city. They did have to work hard for this. They did come to an agreement with Atlantic Lottery to allow them to build the grandstand there in Summerside and, again, I tip my cap to Gail Shea for building nice barns. Did a nice job up there on that, and allowed the Prince County Horseman's Club to continue on when things looked very dire for some time under the previous administration.

However, what we've done with regard to race dates is turned over an amount of money that goes into the purse pool. The horse owners industry association takes that money and they decide, through a formulation, where and how often they should race. They do use the number of horses available, they look at how many

people are attending these races, what the bets are at each of these tracks, and they formulate the number of races for each of the locales by that.

We stay out of the business totally. They're the ones that are experts. Prince County Horseman's Club have representatives that sit on this industry association and they help come up with the formula that allows the numbers that are chosen in that fashion. Great to hear the city standing up for themselves and looking out for what's best.

What I could give them, a piece of information is, continue to work very diligently toward increasing their crowds, make it a venue that they all want to come to. They'll increase their bets. It'll make it very tough on the industry association not to increase their cards.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Settlement strategy

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My first question's to the minister of innovation. Mr. Minister, are you releasing your famous settlement strategy today? Are you going to be doing that?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Yes, we will be releasing, I guess, as the Leader of the Opposition refers to it, our famous settlement strategy later today.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This settlement strategy's been worked on for well over two years. I see a lot of your staff are joining us right now so I hope you're very clear with your answers because it's so important.

The South Korean community had real concerns with the settlement issues on PEI. What will make them happy in this strategy that you're going to release this afternoon?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I want to thank the Korean community here in Prince Edward Island for being part of the development of our settlement strategy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Campbell: Staff have gone to great lengths, Madam Speaker, to consult with over 40 stakeholders with respect to recruitment and retention here in the province.

As well, I met with a number of the stakeholders, including Dr. Chung, a representative from the Korean society. He had some great input, some great thoughts to put towards our settlement strategy and we're very glad to have incorporated those into the final product.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the

Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the same minister. Your staff's worked on this for over two years. You've announced that it was going to be announced in several speeches of the throne. I know you were ready to do a draft release in August. My question to you. Dr. Edward Chung, he had raised some concerns around issues around employment, especially - what, in particular, will be in this settlement strategy that will address Dr. Chung's concerns for the South Korean community?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I will be making an announcement with respect to the settlement strategy here very shortly. Then, following that, under Tabling of Documents, will be very pleased to table that document. I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition will have an opportunity, then, to review it and I'm very sure that she'll be sharing her thoughts with us back on the floor of the Legislature.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Language policy

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Since the document's going to be released today, and you know it has such priority to your immigration strategy in the province, perhaps we'll just ask a few questions on it this afternoon.

My question to you is: What is the province's official language policy in relationship to both immigrants and refugees that would be contained in your settlement strategy?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

We've very pleased to have our settlement strategy translated into, I believe, either five or six different languages to ensure that we reach out to all of our new Islanders and provide them with an overview of what services are available and what we intend to accomplish with our settlement strategy.

Of course, we all know that the Leader of the Opposition is very familiar with due process. Again, I will be making a statement with respect to the settlement strategy and will be tabling it under Tabling of Documents.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the minister, that's absolutely wonderful that the document will be available in other languages. But my question to the same minister is, in terms of for your government department, what is your official language policies and will there be translation services available if perhaps someone wants to go to a physician, to the QEH? Tell us about what your language policy will be for immigrants and refugees.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Certainly we understand in the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning and the Population Secretariat that language is probably one of the greatest barriers that our newcomers to Prince Edward Island face in integrating into our society here in Prince Edward Island. We do go to great lengths with our partners, and I know that there are some staff here and some management from the association of newcomers, and I want to thank them for coming here this afternoon. They're an absolutely fantastic group who do yeoman's service to help integrate our new Islanders into society here in Prince Edward Island.

I expect that if there are any new Islanders who are having issues around language and need help in service delivery with respect to health care, I would encourage them to contact the association of newcomers. We, as a government, have greatly increased the funding to association of newcomers over the past three years and we're very proud, and we clearly recognize the value of the services that they provide to immigrants and to new Islanders. We have a great relationship with the association of newcomers and we will continue to foster that great relationship with the association of newcomers.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition, final question.

Refugees

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the minister, in regards to the settlement strategy, I know a lot of attention is put on immigrants, but we also have many

refugees. Sometimes for refugees it means they've left a traumatic situation in their home. It could be a war zone, etc. When they arrive here, sometimes it can happen that young people end up in the same school. My question to the minister is: I understand in the past when translation services are required for perhaps two students who are having difficulties, the newcomers actually send a translator that's probably 14, 15, 16 years of age. Can you tell us what's in the settlement strategy that will address the particular issues of refugees?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'm not sure if the Leader of the Opposition is being critical of the services provided by the association of newcomers here today. I certainly hope not, because they do provide great service here in the province.

As the Leader of the Opposition may or may not be aware, the funding for service delivery to refugees is a responsibility of the federal government. Now, we have recognized that, with increased immigration efforts here in the province, we need to do more, and we've done more. In the past year this government has invested over \$4.5 million into the integration of new Islanders into our society here on Prince Edward Island because we greatly value both the economic and the cultural contributions that they make to society here in Prince Edward Island.

We've increased our investment, Madam Speaker.

We will continue to invest in the newcomers to make sure that they integrate totally into the society here in Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

World AIDS Day

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise today to recognize December the 1st as World AIDS Day. World AIDS Day was first observed in 1988 after a summit of health ministers from around the world called for a spirit of social acceptance and greater exchange of information on HIV and AIDS. This day serves to strengthen the global effort to face the challenges of the AIDS pandemic and shine a light of understanding and awareness on the issue.

In Canada it is estimated that the number of people living with HIV is approximately 65,000, and each year between 2,300 and 4,500 new cases of HIV are reported across Canada.

World AIDS Day has been recognized in PEI since 1991 with the establishment of the AIDS PEI Community Support Group Inc. This group began as a simple support group for people living with HIV/AIDS in PEI and although it has had a small following, it has had a huge impact on the issues of this disease in our province.

In 1999 AIDS PEI opened its doors and started providing a single location for Islanders to learn about prevention services, education and awareness of HIV/AIDS, as well as support services for people living with HIV/AIDS.

With the indulgence of the House, I would like to commend the staff and board of

directors of AIDS PEI for their commitment, some of whom are in the gallery today. I would like to recognize Alana Leard and George Clark-Dunning who are in the gallery today, along with other members.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to, with your indulgence, just share other names of people on their executive: Robert Hainsworth, Tom Hilton, Pat Murray, Pam O'Neil, Deanna Carroll, Elizabeth Drummond, Kay Hryckiwi, Leslie Labobe, Troy Perrot, Ron Srigley and Patti Wheatley.

Tonight a special World AIDS Day service will be held here in Charlottetown at St. Paul's Anglican Church on Richmond Street at 7 p.m. This year's organizers present "A Service of Lament and Hope: An Evening of Music and Prayer." Along with prayers, readings and hymns, the Eagle Island singers will provide traditional Mi'kmaq drumming and music, and all are welcome to attend.

In closing I would like to ask members of the Legislative Assembly and Islanders across our One Island Community to take time today to remember those who have lost their lives to HIV and AIDS, to support those affected and who are living with this disease, and to wear a red ribbon as a sign of support for AIDS PEI and their mission.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to echo the minister's comments. Today is such an important day of recognition. The fight against HIV and

AIDS continues today and although some progress has been made, we still have a long way to go. In regards to AIDS PEI, they continue to do a lot of work not only in the area of education and advocacy, but they also do a lot of work to help with public education, and especially to help address some of the issues because of homophobia and other kinds of issues that we're dealing with. I would just like to wish them all the best in their work, it's really important, and thank them for joining us today.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

Positive Parenting from Two Homes - For Kids!

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, I'd like to acknowledge a guest.

First of all, I'd like to acknowledge Gordon Ritchie, who's the coordinator of the Positive Parenting from Two Homes program in the House today. There are more facilitators, but they are scattered throughout the province, and I just want to acknowledge Gordon and his leadership and his commitment to the program. It is a wonderful program, helping families in Island communities. Thank you very much, Gordon.

I rise today with a positive message about parenting. A very special community-based program of Justice and Public Safety has expanded into Island schools. Positive Parenting from Two Homes For Kids! supports children impacted by separation, divorce or parenting from two homes. It complements the Positive Parenting from

Two Homes program currently offered to adults throughout our One Island Community.

The highly-rated program brings children experiencing similar situations together in friendship. They share and speak openly in a supportive environment about very sensitive, mature subject matter at an age-appropriate level. Together, they explore the definition of family, changes that separation and divorce bring to a family and how these changes affect children. They address concerns about how separation and divorce will impact their future, they discuss appropriate and inappropriate interaction between parents and children and they learn helpful communication skills. Perhaps most importantly, they learn that they are not alone in their feelings and that what is happening between their parents is not their fault.

There is no other program like this in the country where trained facilitators are partnering with school guidance counsellors to offer age-appropriate information to children in a confidential, supportive school environment during a confusing, often stressful time in their personal lives. At the end of five one-hour sessions guidance counsellors are still available to provide helpful follow-up to support the students.

By bringing this valuable program to schools, it is more accessible, reaching more than double the number of youth. Children have a supportive community when they really need it and the support is there for them throughout the school year.

Because of a partnership with Children's Mental Health Network and funding through the Children's Secretariat, we now deliver an additional 11 programs to 14 different schools. We will, as well, be expanding to include children at grades 1 to 3 and intermediate school levels.

I am proud of the tremendous partnership of my two departments, but I'm especially proud how the partnership is supporting the children, youth and families in our One Island Community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Settlement Strategy

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

For the past several years, the Province of Prince Edward Island has faced both a great opportunity and a daunting challenge with the remarkable increase in the level of immigration. Just a few years ago, it was normal to see 100 or perhaps 200 immigrants each year in this province. In the past few years that pattern has changed dramatically.

Immigration to this province began to grow rapidly in 2006, and by 2008-2009 it had reached the point where just under 1,800 people had chosen to immigrate to Prince Edward Island as permanent residents. That same year we saw a further 723 foreign nationals come to Prince Edward Island as temporary residents, many as international students, or as temporary foreign workers.

This has been a tremendous shift for Prince Edward Island and one for Islanders themselves. I am proud to say that our province, our communities and our businesses and services have made heroic efforts to respond to the challenges of immigration as quickly as they arise. When our schools faced an influx of students fluent in neither English or French, they added staff and resources. When our

environment officers began to see Chinese newcomers fishing at Island streams, they organized Mandarin language seminars to educate people about our angling regulations. When community groups saw newcomers trying to navigate Island society, they set up night classes, mentorship and foreign language church services.

In the midst of that period of change, we have seen some great immigrant success stories here on Prince Edward Island. Stories like that of Frank Zhou who moved to the Island in 2004 and now operates two Island companies, one with two branches in China, and employs up to 25 people here in our province.

I want to welcome Frank and his wife Sherry Huang who have joined us in the gallery today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Campbell: Frank is now a board member at the University of Prince Edward Island. His business experience and education, combined with his ability to switch fluently from Mandarin to English, make him a tremendous asset to our Island community.

Another good example are Cornwall business people Nam and Soon, who I believe are joining us today as well, who moved to Prince Edward Island in 2006 under the auspices of the Provincial Nominee Program. This couple took over operation of the Winfield Motel in North River and soon added to the business by building a Korean grocery to offer Asian goods to Islanders and members of the growing community of new Islanders.

I think we are just starting to see the tremendous benefits new Islanders are bringing to our community, and success stories like these will become more and

more common. Today, the Government of Prince Edward Island is announcing its plans to build on the growth of immigration. The Prince Edward Island Settlement Strategy represents a deliberate effort to welcome newcomers into our community, to make it as easy as possible for newcomers to settle into Island homes and Island careers, and to improve our success rate when it comes to retaining the immigrants who do come here and keeping them as permanent members of our One Island Community.

Our goal here is to build on our natural strength as a welcoming community and to make certain our service and support to newcomers is contributing to a culturally diverse and prosperous province. We intend to make settlement work better on Prince Edward Island by targeting the areas where newcomers to the province may face the greatest challenges: the development of language skills, the pursuit of employment and business opportunities and the enjoyment of a good quality of life in our Island community.

This is not a strategy that has been developed in isolation. Over the last 18 months the Population Secretariat carried out research and got input from over 40 non-government organizations, newcomer's groups, service providers and communities. We also took the time to consult with all levels of government for their thoughts on the experience of newcomers on the Island and their advice on ways we can better serve and welcome new Islanders.

Government understands that it is not alone in welcoming newcomers to the province. But government also understands that it is we, the elected representatives of Prince Edward Island, who have to take a leadership role in attracting and retaining newcomers, in eliminating barriers to successful settlement, and in making sure that all Islanders, whether new to the

province or from long-established families, enjoy the benefits that this province has to offer.

The initiatives within the Prince Edward Island Settlement Strategy will enhance the ability of the PEI Population Secretariat to provide newcomers with the most appropriate and reliable tools for successful settlement and inclusion. The Settlement Strategy includes tools for improving the integration of new Islanders, benchmarks to help us measure the success of our settlement efforts, and commitments to consult with all Islanders as we maintain an open Island community.

Prince Edward Island has a well-earned reputation as a friendly place, a caring community and a place where neighbours help neighbours. This Settlement Strategy represents government's commitment to helping new Islanders experience and share in all the strength and warmth of our Island community. We believe that old-stock Islanders and newcomers to our province will all benefit as we weave the culture and experience of people around the world into the fabric of our One Island Community.

I mentioned earlier the role of the Association for Newcomers, and I want to welcome again executive director Craig Mackie. I believe the chair of the board, Dan Doran, is here and a number of staff as well. Also want to welcome all of our new Islanders who have joined us here this afternoon. This morning I had the pleasure of attending the Association for Newcomers launch of their online orientation guide, a fantastic piece of work that only adds to the efforts we're making here on behalf of all Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to rise and welcome a lot of our guests this afternoon here today on such an important day. Dr. Edward Chung is here, Mr. MacKie from the newcomers association, and so many other immigrant people and their families. I want to say how important it is for immigration to be in Prince Edward Island. Not only is it important because of the investment in businesses, but more important than that it's the investment in human capital. It's the skills, the knowledge, it's the opportunities to help expand our economy here.

I know with this settlement strategy we've been asking for it, and so have the stakeholders, as well as newcomers themselves, for well over two years. We have high expectations on this settlement strategy that has been worked on with a variety of people, so we want to be able to see actual, tangible measures and results. We want to see not just words any more, but we want to really be able to believe that the work has been done and that people want to work on retaining our immigrant population here. We want to make sure, in this document, that the message from government is loud and clear, and that's one that there's going to be no more abuse or mismanagement as in the past with the PNP. We want to remember in the Auditor General's report, the Auditor General had requested a settlement strategy in his report of 2009.

We're getting it now, so we really want to make sure in that Settlement Strategy that it does cover the issues. Some of these issues, it's not just for people that are immigrants, but it's also for the refugees. Some of the issues that I hear from people, whether or

not there's health services at the QEH hospital when an immigrant person goes in and requires health services - is there translation there? Are there understandings around customs so that people are treated with respect? These are all areas that are identified and we want to be able to see what's actually in the Settlement Strategy that shows strong actions and measurable activities within that particular strategy.

I know the Population Secretariat has been working on this, I know the minister has been telling us, but, unfortunately, although we get many immigrants to come here, we lose people, and we're losing them faster than we are retaining them. So this is a very important piece of work.

I look forward to be able to see it this afternoon, but I know there are high expectations on the deliverables because in the end it really does matter. We need to have people here. We have major issues around our own population, so we really hope the minister has taken this responsibility seriously, and addressed employment issues for immigrant people, has addressed housing issues, has addressed translation issues, etc. So we look forward to seeing the document.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

National Safe Driving Week

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Today marks the start of National Safe Driving Week across Canada. Over the next few months a whole new set of challenges will appear on Canadian roads. With that in

mind, there's a number of great tips that can help Island drivers to be prepared for winter driving.

It's very important that drivers ensure their vehicles are prepared for cold, icy conditions, especially our newcomers that are driving here, too. For one, drivers should get their vehicles serviced in the fall before winter arrives. Four matching, certified winter tires should be installed. Vehicles should be equipped with an emergency kit. This kit should include warm blankets, matches, shovels, ice scraper, booster cables, a flashlight and other items that could come in handy in an emergency situation on the highway.

Most important, drivers need to adjust their driving for conditions. If the road is icy or snow covered and the visibility is bad, the best thing a driver can do, if they can't find a safe place to stay, is to slow down and drive with care. That is the best way to avoid collisions on our Island highways.

During this year's National Safe Driving Week it's my sincere hope that Islanders prepare themselves properly for the kinds of conditions we've come to expect during our winter months here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

For more information on this National Safe Driving Week, you can visit www.safety-council.org.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

The Culinary Alliance

Mr. Vessey: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise in the House this afternoon to draw attention to the significant progress made by the Culinary Alliance this past year. The production and harvest of our iconic foods, such as lobster, oysters, mussels, potatoes and beef, have shaped our landscape and our culture and it now forms the essence of who we are as a tourism destination.

As minister of tourism, I want to salute our fishers and farmers and I want to affirm the role they'll be playing in the future of tourism to PEI. Together we are stewards of the Prince Edward Island brand and we need to combine our efforts in promoting this brand, whether it be through our efforts at Tourism PEI or through organizations such as the Prince Edward Island Potato Board.

The Culinary Alliance was formed last year to celebrate, promote and grow PEI food products and experiences. The scope and reach of the alliance is comprehensive. It partners with four provincial government departments, ACOA, Prince Edward Island Potato Board, the Mussel Industry Council, the Prince Edward Island Aquaculture Alliance, the Prince Edward Island Association of Chefs and Cooks, Holland College, the Prince Edward Island Seafood Processors Association, the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association Ltd. and the PEI Regional Tourism Association.

The past year has seen much progress, including our buy local PEI Flavours promotion, led by my colleagues at the Department of Agriculture. The launch of the Prince Edward Island Potato Board campaign, Pack Your Appetite, which now, in its second year, assists to promote culinary tourism on Prince Edward Island. The creation of the new Prince Edward Island Flavours culinary trail features over 100 culinary experiences, farm markets, fishers, farmers and restaurants that support local food producers. This guide serves both tourists and locals who want to know where

they go to get PEI products. The expansion of the Fall Flavours Festival to celebrate our food from tip to tip in partnership with all of our regional tourism associations. The PEI booth at the New York food and wine show, where the PEI stand was easily recognized as one of the most popular booths. The publication of the chef association's *Flavours of Prince Edward Island*, a cookbook that has been recognized nationally.

All of these projects happen in the spirit of partnership and collaboration. We are very excited to be part of this initiative and we anticipate more announcements in the near future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Health PEI Receives Accreditation

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today and announce that Health PEI has received national accreditation by Accreditation Canada. This accreditation award confirms that the programs and services provided in health care facilities across Prince Edward Island are meeting national standards.

The Department of Health and Wellness and Health PEI are committed to quality care and services for every Islander. The participation in the accreditation process is key to measuring our clinical and operational performance against established health care standards. It not only assists us in identifying opportunities to improve patient care and service, but also serves as a means of transparency and accountability to our one Island community.

Surveyors were on Prince Edward Island from September 26 through to October 1st visiting health facilities, evaluating patient and client programs and services, as well as examining administrative and support services. Ten surveyors, experts within their field, including physicians, nurses, administrators, lab technologists and pharmacists travelled across the province reviewing documentation, performing team interviews, participating in facility tours and meeting with staff, clients and community partners.

I understand this has been the most complete reporting that's ever been done for our health system on Prince Edward Island, so it's really (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, the accreditation report recognizes strength and leadership of our government and board of directors, the CEO, staff and physicians of Health PEI, all who have worked together in defining a clear vision and strategic plan with its focus on quality for the health system.

The survey results identify many strengths throughout the system. The restructuring of our health operations, including a strong leadership organization within the newly formed Health PEI board. The accreditation team praises the new collaborative model of care and recognized it as an important initiative in engaging patients, clients and residents in their own care and to support health providers to work within their full scope of practice.

The report highlights the success seen in decreasing wait times in diagnostic imaging, implementation of the provincial stroke program, plans to implement a provincial palliative care program, and the strong community support of our health facilities

that are received from such contributions as foundations and auxiliaries.

The report also identified a number of areas to improve on, because it is like a report card for our government and for the health system across PEI. Health PEI will continue to communicate with Accreditation Canada regarding recommendations made.

May I also tell the House today that we have worked on and we have realized those other recommendations from the previous reports, so we received a check mark in terms of the work that we've done to date in followup. Followup reports will be sent back to Accreditation Canada to demonstrate our progress.

In close, as Minister of Health and Wellness with responsibility for overseeing the health system, I am pleased that the surveyors recognized the significant focus this government and board, staff and physicians of Health PEI have placed on quality and patient safety and the improvements we have made over the last three years. Quality improvement is a continuous process. As minister, I will be able to use this report to monitor this process being made by our health system in achieving our common objective of improving the quality of health care for every Islander.

For those Islanders or anyone in the House today wishing to see this document, it is a public document and it can be found on the Health PEI website at healthpei.ca.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

Transition Expo 2010 (Montague)

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House today to encourage students with disabilities and their families to learn more about the services and opportunities available in Prince Edward Island.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is partnering with the Eastern School District and the community to host another Transition Expo in eastern Prince Edward Island.

Transition Expo 2010 will take place tonight, Wednesday, December 1st, from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Montague Regional High School. Information will be available in both English and French on a wide variety of topics.

As many as 40 service providers and organizations from across the province will be on hand to present information to interested students and family members. Services include: education and training, assistive technology, employment opportunities, financial assistance, life skills and day programs, recreational and leisure opportunities, residential options, respite care, transportation, as well as support organizations and advocacy.

Events such as this allow students with disabilities and their families to learn more about options and opportunities available to them now and after high school. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and school staff work with students and their families to discuss options available to them. The goal is to work together to develop a transition plan that will help students meet their personal and professional objectives.

A Transition Expo was also held this fall in Summerside and it was a tremendous

success.

If Islanders are wondering what options are available to you in your community, take the time to visit the Transition Expo in Montague or contact the resource specialists at your local school. Tonight's Transition Expo in Montague will be a great opportunity to meet with representatives from the government, private and not-for-profit agencies that support students with disabilities and their families.

For more information, contact the resource teacher at your school or Shelley Nelson, Community Access Facilitator, at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: Pursuant to Section 46 of the *Legislative Assembly Act*, I wish to advise that I have received the 2010 Report of the Indemnities & Allowance Commission. I move that the report of the commission be received and do lie on the Table.

Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

By leave of the House, I beg leave to table Prince Edward Island Settlement Strategy and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, with your indulgence as well.

I'd like to extend an invitation to anyone who is still remaining in the gallery, as well as my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly, to join us downstairs for a short reception to welcome some more of our new Islanders to Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Reports by Committees

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Legislative Management and yourself, as Chair, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that a report of the said committee on Motion No. 56, The Future of Province House, be received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that the report of the committee be adopted.

On April 29th, 2010 your committee was unanimously directed by this Legislative Assembly to review the 1974 Province House agreement between the Government of Prince Edward Island and the Government of Canada and to report back to the Legislative Assembly with recommendations for revisions to the agreement which would:

One: Ensure the long-term structural maintenance of the building.

Two: Transform Province House into a much more dynamic place for engaging Islanders in the history, culture and operation of their own Legislature and democracy.

I wish to advise that your committee has completed this review including the conduct of public hearings on the matter and respectfully submits to the Legislative Assembly the following 14 recommendations:

One: Your committee is of the view that the continued presence of Parks Canada at Province is imperative and in the long-term best interest of restoring and maintaining the building for Islanders and all Canadians.

Two: Your committee urges Parks Canada to live up to the responsibilities assigned to it under the 1974 Province House Memorandum of Agreement in regard to structural maintenance of Province House.

Three: Your committee recommends that Province House be fully restored before the 150th anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference in 2014 and that a long-term legacy fund be established to ensure the building is maintained into the future.

Four: Your committee stresses that Province House, in addition to the national historic significance noted above, is Prince Edward Island's most important provincial building, and as such, the provincial government must become more actively involved in ensuring that the building is maintained and well cared for.

Five: Your committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly take on a greater role in the management of Province House.

Six: Your committee recommends that the 1974 Province House Memorandum of Agreement be revised and the Legislative Assembly be added as a signatory.

Seven: Your committee recommends that a Province House Committee be formed.

Eight: Your committee recommends that a revised Province House Memorandum of Agreement include a re-allocation of space designated for the use of the Legislative Assembly and Parks Canada within the building, the details of which is presented in the report.

Nine: Your committee recommends that a revised agreement include a life-cycle plan for the Province House structure.

Ten: Your committee recommends that interpretation of Province House be expanded and enhanced in order to include the full scope of legislative and democratic history on Prince Edward Island including but not limited to the Charlottetown Conference of 1864.

Eleven: Your committee recommends that in the revised MOA, interpretation of Province House be jointly delivered, with Parks Canada bringing expertise on the Confederation message and the Legislative Assembly focusing on Province House colonial, provincial and legislative history.

Twelve: Your committee recommends that as we proceed into the future with the interpretation and operation of Province House, attempts to re-engage Islanders with their Legislature must be made whenever possible.

Thirteen: Your committee recommends that a Visitor Services and Public Engagement division within the Office of the Legislative Assembly be created.

Fourteen: Your committee recommends that the Office of the Legislative Assembly further investigate the possibility of obtaining a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Province House.

Your committee wishes to thank the various individuals and organizations who shared their views on the future of Province House and Parks Canada for providing the Province House library as an appropriate location for the committee to conduct its public consultations.

The vision for Province House as expressed in this report includes: lasting structural integrity; comprehensive historical interpretation; effective use of space; local decision making and responsibility; re-engagement of Islanders; and a new management and operational framework for what is arguably Prince Edward Island's most important building.

Your committee is confident that with the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report, the future of Province House will be bright and the building with the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island as its main occupant will be a continued source of pride for Islanders and Canadians for generations to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As chair of the Standing Committee on Privileges, Rules and Private Bills, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee and I move, seconded by the hon.

Government House Leader that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that the report of the committee be adopted and that consideration of the private bill be added to Orders Other Than Government of this House.

Your committee has considered Bill 200, *An Act to Amend An Act to Incorporate International Trust Company*, and Bill 201, *An Act to Amend An Act to Incorporate the St. Thomas D'Aquin Society* and found both bills to be private in nature.

Your committee recommends that a fee of \$60 be charged for Bill 200 and that no fee be charged for Bill 201.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the School Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the School Act*, Bill No. 31, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, a brief explanation?

Mr. D. Currie: This legislation asked the boards to develop procedure policies and a code of ethics, and gives authority to the minister to give direction - gives authority for a minister to appoint an official trustee to conduct the affairs of a board when the board is not functioning in the public interest, the school board is not acting in the best interest of students, jeopardizes education and the inability to fill the mandate in the best interest of children and learning.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Provincial Court Act*, Bill No. 29, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, a brief explanation?

Mr. D. Currie: Just small changes. The bill introduces amendments to the *Provincial Court Act*, in part in order to reflect the recommendations of the Judicial Remuneration Review Commission and subsequently adopted by the Legislature in May 2008. These amendments will change vacation entitlements to accord present practice and provide for remuneration of bilingual judges.

Largely the amendments address housekeeping issues and serve to make the language of the act gender neutral.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General.

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *Pension Benefits Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Pension Benefits Act*, Bill No. 30, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, a brief explanation?

Mr. D. Currie: The intent is to bring it to first reading and obviously the next step is to bring it to an extensive public consultation starting in January to last for approximately three to four or five months.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour.

Ms. Sherry: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Labour Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Labour Act*, Bill No. 35, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, would you care to give a brief explanation?

Ms. Sherry: These amendments cause employees of ambulance services, the people who answer or dispatch emergency calls for police, fire or ambulance services to be included with the workers who are considered essential and therefore do not have the right to strike. This amendment also gives the employees the right to binding arbitration, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour.

Ms. Sherry: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, Bill No. 34, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, a brief explanation?

Ms. Sherry: Madam Speaker, these amendments allow employees who are, as of December 15th, 2010, employees of a retail business, the right to refuse to work on Sunday.

It also prevents employers from penalizing any such employee who does not work on a Sunday. Previously, this only applied to employees employed by retail business before the section was brought into force in 2006.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brown: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Beverage Containers Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Beverage Containers Act*, Bill No. 33, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, a brief explanation?

Mr. Brown: Madam Speaker, this permits the Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs to appoint persons, not employees of the department, as auditors for the purpose of the *Beverage Containers Act*.

Government Motions

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I present herewith with a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, which said message is signed by Her Honour.

Speaker: Hon. members, I'd ask the Clerk to read the message from Her Honour, and I'd ask you to stand as the message is being read.

Clerk: Honourable Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Province House, Charlottetown
Prince Edward Island

Dear Madam Speaker:

Her Honour, the Honourable Barbara A. Hagerman, Lieutenant Governor of the

Province of Prince Edward Island, hereby transmits Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure that were required to carry on the public services of the Province for the fiscal year ending 31 March 2010.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, the Prince Edward Island Terms of Union, 1873, and the *Financial Administration Act*, Her Honour recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Commended by

Rory Beck
Clerk of Executive Council

and Her Honour Barbara A. Hagerman,
Lieutenant Governor

Speaker: Hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Madam Speaker, by Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I present here with the Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Province of Prince Edward Island in support of the *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2010* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, that consideration of the Supplementary Estimates in Committee of the Whole House be added to the orders of the day until such time as they are dispatched.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, that the 26th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 26, *Electric Power (Electricity-Rate Reduction) Amendment Act*, Bill No. 25, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intitled *Electric Power (Electricity-Rate Reduction) Amendment Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, that the same be now received and read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Electric Power (Electricity-Rate Reduction) Amendment Act*, Bill No. 25, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole

House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I call on the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter to come down and chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (Biggar): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Electric Power (Electricity-Rate Reduction) Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: Mr. Minister, whenever you're ready, perhaps you'd like to give an explanation or whatever, bring someone on the floor.

Whenever you're ready, minister. We're just finishing handing out things. Whenever you want to begin, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Brown: I guess a brief explanation of the act is that for a number of years now, energy and energy supply and distribution has been a question of numerous governments, right back to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s during the electrification of rural PEI right up to today.

There was a number of changes made over the years and as we all know, just to make it clear, the Legislature, through the *Energy Power Act*, grants a monopoly to a company on Prince Edward Island. We in the Legislature have granted a monopoly to Maritime Electric to provide service to the residents of Prince Edward Island and to the City of Summerside to provide electrical service there.

This is done in a lot of jurisdictions because

what it's meant to do is that is says: You as a company can provide electric power to the customers and no one else will be able to do it. That's what we've granted Maritime Electric through the Legislature. So the *Electric Power Act* is basically a contract between the people of Prince Edward Island and the electric company. So when you read the act, that's what it basically is. It's a contract between us and the power company, and certain clauses in that act set limits and set limitations and guidelines for that company to provide electric service.

One of the main things of the act is that the company shall seek and provide the lowest cost power to the residents of PEI. It shall also provide continuous service and to work diligently to make sure that the electric lines are up and that the electricity is at maximum availability to the customers of Prince Edward Island. So that's the act that we give Maritime Electric or any company that does it.

Some other jurisdictions are wide open. In Canada, most jurisdictions - I think Alberta has a semi-open system - but most of them provide for this type of legislation. A lot of the utilities in Canada - I think it's in Newfoundland, the production of power is owned by the people of Newfoundland. The distribution is owned by a private company in Nova Scotia, both production and distribution are done by a private company. New Brunswick, the production and distribution is owned by a public company or a Crown corporation. Also in Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and BC are publicly owned too. The majority of the power. So that's the premise.

Over the years we've worked with Maritime Electric in order to see how we can improve the system to the people of Prince Edward Island. Just a brief history. In 1973 a cable was extended across Northumberland Strait, which basically took us off Island

generation and allowed us to purchase power from outside of our province. Before then, all power was produced down on the waterfront through this plant in Summerside and a few little plants throughout Prince Edward Island. That was very expensive power and, at that point in time, the federal government helped Prince Edward Island purchase that cable. I think they bought half at first. They gave us a loan on the other part of it and in a couple years they wrote off the loan for us. That then allowed us to take some of our plants on the waterfront, and basically now they're backup power in case the cables are broke or that we have to provide backup power to another jurisdiction outside of Prince Edward Island.

Then Point Lepreau came along and there was a stake bought purchase in Point Lepreau. Then Dalhousie came along and a stake in Dalhousie was purchased. Costs were rising. In 1983 the government of the day, under Jim Lee, took New Brunswick to court because they were selling us power more expensive than they were selling in the United States. The National Energy Board ordered New Brunswick to sell its power to the PEI at the same rate it was charging its US customers. That resulted in a substantial increase at that point in time.

Then various deals were tried to be made to work out with other provinces in terms of buying power. We always ran into - we could get power. There was a number of deals by both administrations with Quebec, but each time we tried to get our power through our sister provinces we were blocked or charged a huge amount of money in order to do it and that power became unacceptable and too expensive. Then we were fortunate that the US - there was a major blackout in the US one time, and the US government and the Congress said: That's not going to happen again, we're going to make sure that our grid system is solid, our production system is solid. So

they set up an organization in the United States to make sure that that was going to happen. If any Canadian province wanted to sell in the United States, they would have to abide by those rules.

Most of our provinces that border the US sell electricity into the United States so therefore they had to abide by the US rules, which are open access transmission. That means that we were allowed to now enter and go out and seek power purchase agreements with other people, with other utilities. We allot power through any province to get our power here.

I continue to fight on the national level that we need a national energy policy in terms of sharing our electricity across Canada. Just one little footnote is that I believe that Canada can be one of the most leading countries in the world when it comes to energy. We have great hydro power, we have great wind regime, we have great nuclear power plants in Canada. A few of them are having a bit of problems now but that'll be worked out. I see, if we were to get our act together in Canada and have one transmission system from one end of this country to the other, we could be on close to 98% of our power in Canada could be produced from green, non-remitting sources, so I continue to fight for that and I think it's a great idea. It's a shame that we can run a cable to the United States faster than we can run a cable across our sister provinces, but we continue today.

We were out looking for seeing what we could do to reduce power costs, as the previous administration has done. We've all tried it, and some have been successful. Most of the time, we've, both administrations, have lowered cost, but they seem to be creeping up each time. This time, when Hydro-Québec and New Brunswick were going to share in an arrangement with each other, where Quebec was going to

assume the assets of NB Power and basically wheel its power there, the premier of the day went up to see Jean Charest and Jean Charest promised him that he would do something for Prince Edward Island in terms of the energy deal between New Brunswick and Quebec. Then we started working with the Hydro-Québec and seeing to get another power purchase agreement out at that point in time. Then what happened was that Quebec did send us some proposals and some agreements down to take a look at. At the same time, they were negotiating with New Brunswick.

When the New Brunswick deal fell through we continued to negotiate with Hydro-Québec. But when it was announced in the House that we were negotiating with Hydro-Québec, other utilities came along. Nalcor from Newfoundland came along with some options for us in Prince Edward Island. Emera came along with some options seeing how they could work with us. I must say, Danny Williams was a - is a good proponent of electric power in Atlantic Canada and the deal that was just done was a fabulous deal for helping.

Then basically we started a bidding process through the utilities because we started getting unsolicited bids in. So what we did is basically took the bids in, compared them, we asked New Brunswick utility to provide more information to us, and they knew we were negotiating with Hydro-Québec, Nalcor, Emera and themselves. So they sharpened their pencil, and when they realized that PEI is New Brunswick's biggest export customer, which gave us an advantage - I don't think a lot of people realized that before then. I think a lot of people thought that we were just a small piece of NB's export market. But we were a major part of their export market so that gave us some leverage there also.

So we negotiated back and forth through the

great efforts of both Wayne MacQuarrie and the people of Maritime Electric, and Bill Marshall. We hired Bill Marshall from New Brunswick. That helped out quite a bit. We chiselled down the prices as low as we could. We basically got them to the point they were mad. Some of them walked away from the table, but we continued to work at it. We came up with a final power of purchase agreement, and at the end of the day the New Brunswick Power was the successful bidder on this terms.

I must say, it is a good contract, it's a long-term contract. It's a five-year agreement. There's a small escalation clause in it that protects Islanders also. I think that's one of the reasons we got a better deal in term of this because we were working always on short-term contracts and opened up to the market access. We allowed and committed to work with New Brunswick in order to further see what we could do in areas.

One of the things I got to say also is that in 2000 the former administration took the energy corporation on a new role by entering into an agreement to set 10 megawatts - two 5.2 megawatt farms up in Tignish. A very successful project, very well managed, I should say. The member that's going to criticize me in a few minutes did it. It helped us stabilize our rates and I must say that that farm saved a lot of money for Islanders over the years and made the corporation some money.

Then in 2003 another wind farm was produced in the Souris area. Again, a very successful project, 30 megawatt project. The transmission system was put in place and that brought us up to about 18% of our power needs. Our power needs are now coming from generation on Prince Edward Island. Through this bill and through the accord, we hope to extend that even further, up to 30%, which will allow us to hedge our energy demand against buying it from other

locations.

If the cable - I say it, but I know its going to happen because it's a great project - the cable comes through Churchill and down through Newfoundland, down to Nova Scotia, it passes very close to our interconnect with the New Brunswick border. You have an agreement between Nalcor and Nova Scotia for transmission. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have an agreement for transmission. That's one of the reasons we are continuing to ask the federal government to support our cable from Prince Edward Island into that inter-tie. Then we can have a truly Atlantic Canada system where we will be getting renewable energy from Newfoundland down through Nova Scotia through New Brunswick. We would hopefully contribute and be a part of that transaction by producing more wind on PEI and putting that wind into the grid also.

When you look at both hydro and wind, they are the best fit for each other. As the former minister of energy did say in this House a number of times, the best fit would be hydro and wind where - once you fire up a big coal plant or a big nuclear power plant it's pretty hard to rev them down and rev them back up. But in hydro you can control the flow of water into the turbines which then allows us to put more wind into the system.

We are working with New Brunswick with the smart grid system for Atlantic Canada in order to see that if wind is blowing we can close the hydro dams or bring up different utilities. I'm a firm believer that we should have one system operator basically in Atlantic Canada to manage all our resources, and if we do that it would even bring prices down or increased stability for us.

So this is a good deal. I think that we'll see that it results in an average of a 14% decrease to Islanders. It does require an

investment by Islanders in some projects. But like the previous administration that got into the wind power, into putting public money into energy production, which was a good idea which we supported in opposition because we knew it was a good plan for Islanders to get into the wind business and to get to producing some of own power. We supported that project, it was a great project, it's paying off.

Now we're going again, asking Islanders, or doing a loan guarantee to the energy corporation to get into more production of our own, and that's only going to allow Islanders the opportunity to secure energy and not be dependent on someone else that at any time can, in the past, cut us off and go somewhere else and sell their power at a better price. That's going to allow Islanders some security here.

We have a good security now up to 18%. We're going to increase it with these long-term contracts. We have further security, and we've also been asked for a commission to be formed to take a look at electric power on Prince Edward Island altogether and see what more can be done in order to make sure that Islanders are looked after when it comes to power and their electric bill.

We have to take some charge of this file. I'm a firm believer in it. When it started in 2001 it was a good idea, when they continued it in 2003 it was a good idea, and we're just furthering those good ideas in order to make sure more security is provided for the people of Prince Edward Island. That's what this bill is all about and the accord is all about.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: I'll just start reading and then if anybody has any questions we'll take them

as we go.

Permission to bring Mr. MacQuarrie on the floor.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: 1. The *Electric Power Act* R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. E-4 is amended by this Act.

2. Subsection 33(2) of the Act is amended by the deletion of the words “Subsection (2)” and the substitution of the words “Subsection (1)”.

3. The Act is amended by the addition of the following after section 47:

Shall those three carry?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Can you explain number 2, minister?

Mr. Brown: This is a housekeeping amendment to correct the incorrect numbering reference to subsection (2).

Currently 33(1) reads: Subject to this Act, no person shall knowingly solicit accept or receive any rebate concession or discrimination in respect to any service or affecting or relating to any public utility whereby any services by any device whatsoever or otherwise rendered free or less than the rate named in the schedule in force.

This is just basically saying that we’re keeping the non-discriminatory practice according to the rate schedule that’s in the back. That the rates will be applied according to that schedule.

Mr. M. Currie: How could somebody receive a rebate?

Mr. Brown: In some places a customer - in an open system a customer could go in and say: Look, I have a power demand and I want a special deal from you and utilities could give out special deals. This disallows that. There are no special deals for anybody under this thing except - that’s laid out in the rate schedule.

Mr. M. Currie: Just the large corporations.

Mr. Brown: There are no large corporations allowed to sign private contracts with the utility.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

3. The Act is amended by the addition of the following after section 47:

Shall it carry? Carried.

48. (1) In this section, “input factors” means, in respect of Maritime Electric Company, Limited,

(a) the items and values set out in Schedule 1; and

(b) any such other factors concerning Maritime Electric Company, Limited that the Commission determines to be input factors for the purpose of this section.

Any questions?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Yes, explain that one please.

Mr. Brown: What we did there was when the Power Purchase Agreement was put together and certain other things were going to be done, i.e., the take out of the payments of Lepreau from here on in and the wind production farms and other things we’re

going to do, we wanted to make sure that the expenses and revenues were clearly outlined in the legislation. Why we've done that is this is basically rate hearing. They would have had to go to IRAC and put those revenues and expenses to IRAC, and IRAC would review each revenue and expense in order to make sure that it's reasonable and it's the best for the customers in Prince Edward Island.

So we've asked for the same to be put in the schedule. So we're only allowing Maritime Electric to use these current expenses as outlined in this schedule 1 and to generate the revenue in order to pay the expenses. That ensures us that, first, number one, we're given - Maritime Electric is able to operate and also be able to - its expenses are in line.

If we just basically would have said to Maritime Electric: This is a good deal, it's going down 14%, go back and run your company, they may have went back - and I'm not saying they would - but they may have gone back and said: Look, we can cut a lot of expenses here and make ourselves more money and more revenue and let the system be downgraded during this agreement.

This ensures that the system is maintained at a proper level and that the revenue is there for the expenses in order to keep the system up to grade while this agreement is in place. So we wanted to make sure that the revenue to pay the expenses to keep the system up-to-date was in place.

Chair: Just continuing to the next section.

Question, the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: The Power Purchase Agreement - so you have a Power Purchase Agreement signed already? (Indistinct) in

March.

Mr. Brown: Maritime Electric has a Power Purchase Agreement. It was signed with New Brunswick. It is signed and it is in place and that Power Purchase Agreement kicks in in March.

Mr. M. Currie: It takes effect in March.

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: But you said you guys negotiated the deal. Right?

Mr. Brown: Hon. member, there was a team put together. What really happened was Wayne and I were going around the Maritimes talking to different utilities at the time, and Quebec negotiations were going on. Emera, in Nova Scotia, sent us an offer. We were in Nova Scotia there one day, Wayne and I, and Emera said: Look, we hear that you're looking for a price out of Quebec. Can we send you one? We said: Great. They sent us an agreement. At that point in time we went to Maritime Electric and we said: We have this agreement from Emera. Maritime Electric said: We're negotiating with New Brunswick.

So basically what we did was combine our efforts into one team in order to do the negotiations. Those negotiations were concluded. The power purchase agreement is between Maritime Electric and New Brunswick Power. It's not with the Government of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. M. Currie: In your opening remarks you said that you and the Premier - I just want to be clear here, that you're not pretending that you guys went out and got this and then it was Maritime Electric that got the price. You said in your opening -

Mr. Brown: I'd say that the catalyst of the negotiations was the Premier's opening

discussion with the Premier of Quebec, and that put the scare in our current producers, our current providers. Then, when Wayne and I were in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland soliciting bids, also, because we wanted a backup, we wanted to make sure that any price we got out of Quebec was the best price we could get, and we wanted to compare it against other prices. Then Emera came with a power purchase agreement or a schedule to Wayne, and we went over to Maritime Electric and basically said: Here's our pricing we're getting in from Quebec, here's our pricing we're getting in from Emera. Maritime Electric said: We're continuing to work with New Brunswick Power.

But we were also - Wayne and I were in New Brunswick a number of times meeting with the president of NB Power and meeting with the energy minister, I know that's going to come up, at the time, and we were soliciting a better deal from them. We were saying: How can we get a better deal? We feel that we're not getting a better deal. When we showed how important PEI was to the New Brunswick system, especially for its export markets, they started listening, especially when we said: We're going to move if we're going to move.

Mr. M. Currie: Will you share those prices you got with the other suppliers with us here today?

Mr. Brown: Hon. member, you know that, you've been in this business. You were a minister of energy for a number of years. You know that these are commercial agreements between Maritime Electric and NB Power. I had to sign confidentiality agreements with those utilities. I can assure you that the executive director, or the CEO, yes, CEO of the corporation has all those, and he was comparing them. You know they're confidential agreements because they're in a competitive market.

For example, Quebec just signed an agreement with Vermont. I've been pushing to get that agreement to see if -

Mr. M. Currie: It was made public.

Mr. Brown: Not the pricing, the agreement.

Mr. M. Currie: Yes, it was. It was for 4.75 a kilowatt.

Mr. Brown: That's where you're wrong. You know what? If you got it, you show me, please, because we have a good case if that's the case.

Mr. M. Currie: Front page in the news.

Mr. Brown: No, that was just -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: That was some -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Don't say the *Guardian's* not reporting the right prices.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Don't say we're - don't be picking on Wayne Thibodeau.

Mr. Brown: No, no. But you understand a commercial agreement.

Mr. M. Currie: I understand, and you do, too, coming from a business family. If you bid on a project that you get to share in what the prices are and the low bidder gets the job - in this case you're using taxpayers' money that you're putting at risk here, and you're indicating to us that there's a lot of strong arm negotiations going on, and that there are excellent prices received for that negotiations to justify the expenditure of our taxpayers' money.

All I want to know is - the Premier always indicated that Quebec was the best, cheapest renewable energy that we could get in Canada, and it was going to come at a very near time. So I would just like to know what Quebec offered the Province of Prince Edward Island. Or did they offer anything?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, they did.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay. Well, tell us.

Mr. Brown: I can't.

Mr. M. Currie: Well, see, you shouldn't do this -

Mr. Brown: Now, now, I've just got to say, this is a contract between Maritime Electric and NB Power.

Mr. M. Currie: No, you said you guys negotiated it. It was the Premier that spearheaded this.

Mr. Brown: But it's not a contract between the Government of Prince Edward Island and NB Power. It's a contract between NB Power and Maritime Electric. As for the comments that it's government money, there is no government money involved in the power purchase agreement that exists between NB Power and Maritime Electric. There's no government money in that contract. You know that. Yes, you do. It's a shame that you go on that it's public money that we're putting into this power purchase agreement. It is not a part of the power purchase agreement.

Mr. M. Currie: You are backstopping their money.

Mr. Brown: We are assuming assets -

Mr. M. Currie: That's taxpayers' money.

Mr. Brown: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: You're saying I don't know that's taxpayers' money. Now, that's not right. You shouldn't say that.

Mr. Brown: What do you mean?

Mr. M. Currie: We're backstopping their loans.

Mr. Brown: And? We have a legislative guarantee, a legislative section in here that says that money is Maritime Electric's money.

Mr. M. Currie: I just don't understand why you don't want to share with us so we all feel comfortable that this is the best deal for Islanders, when you're using our money to assist Maritime Electric, a profit making monopoly in this province, to give us the prices. I mean, when your brother bids on projects, when the taxpayers' money is used, I can certainly go down and find out what's paid, every day.

Mr. Sheridan: (Indistinct) every day.

Mr. M. Currie: That's what we don't know. Islanders want to know if there's a better price out there.

Mr. Brown: So you're not going to take -

Mr. M. Currie: That's what we're going to get.

Mr. Brown: Okay -

Mr. M. Currie: Just be patient now. Just be patient.

Chair: Minister of energy.

Mr. M. Currie: Don't get touchy. Don't get touchy.

Mr. Brown: No, no. No, no.

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

Mr. Brown: Okay. So, so what we're saying is we hired an independent person, Bill Marshall -

Mr. M. Currie: Is he a brother of Stan?

Mr. Brown: No. I knew you were going to say that. Good line. No, we hired him -

Mr. M. Currie: Just so the people know, Stan Marshall is the head of Fortis, owners of Maritime Electric.

Mr. Brown: Bill Marshall worked for NB Power and he worked for the system operators.

Mr. M. Currie: So there's no relationship?

Mr. Brown: No, there's no relationship. He reviewed the contracts, and he was the one that said: This is your best contract. This is the same way IRAC does it when they do theirs. I'm like yourself. When IRAC would approve rates, at IRAC, over the *Electric Power Act*, I would say: What are the rates? They'd say: It's a private agreement between two private companies, or a private company and NB Power, and you're not allowed access to it. But we'd have an independent person look at it to say yes or no, that they're right. That's the way it's done in the industry, and we followed that same way by hiring Bill Marshall to review the different contracts, and he then determined this was your best contract.

Mr. M. Currie: Was there a problem with Quebec's price in regards to transmission?

Mr. Brown: Yes, there was.

Mr. M. Currie: The cost of transmission?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, it was still like, it was a

price at the NB-Quebec border, and then we had to get it through, but overall, there's a number of things that have to be in consideration when you're purchasing power: the power itself, the auxiliary services that go along with it, the transformers, the load balancing, the demand, when you need it, when you don't need it. Bill Marshall was the person that took all of those factors and said this is your best deal.

Mr. M. Currie: So you don't want to share those prices with Islanders?

Mr. Brown: It's not my prices. It's Maritime Electric's prices.

Mr. M. Currie: No, you're indicating in the ads that you're reducing the price for Islanders, it's the government doing the job, and you're using government money. But you're saying - when I asked you a pointed question you reflect it over to Maritime Electric. Will Maritime Electric share the price with us?

Mr. Brown: What I can do for you is ask Maritime Electric if they can share the prices with you as a member, but you'll have to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Mr. M. Currie: I swore an oath when I came in here, same as you did.

Mr. Brown: You'll have to sign a - you signed a confidentiality agreement when you entered Cabinet.

Mr. M. Currie: I signed an oath.

Mr. Brown: Yeah, so you couldn't talk outside of Cabinet, could you?

Mr. M. Currie: Do you?

Mr. Brown: No.

Chair: Moving on to 48. (2):

(2) On and after March 1, 2011, Maritime Electric Company, Limited shall provide service in the province at the rates, tolls and charges as are established as its lawful rates, tolls and charges pursuant to this section, and on the terms and conditions of the service that were established and in effect immediately prior to March 1, 2011.

(3) The rates, tolls and charges set out in Schedule 2, as adjusted pursuant to subsection (13), are the lawful rates, tolls and charges of Maritime Electric Company, Limited.

(4) For greater certainty, the rates, tolls and charges set out in Schedule 2 have been calculated pursuant to the application of the formula for the energy cost adjustment mechanism established pursuant to Commission Order -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Chair: Okay, I'll just finish reading and then let you have the floor.

Mr. M. Currie: I was thinking (Indistinct) the whole thing. I was just wondering if we did paragraph by paragraph - this is an important act and -

Chair: Of course. I just wasn't sure if you had a question. We can stop. Maybe I'll just finish reading that and go back.

Mr. M. Currie: You're at (4)?

Chair: Yes, I'm in the middle of (4).

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Chair: Okay: - pursuant to Commission Order UE05-01, as it has been revised by the Commission in subsequent orders, and as modified to meet the requirements of the

Prince Edward Island Energy Accord.

I started reading at (2). If you have a question under (2), (3) or (4)?

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, could you go into detail on (2), please?

Mr. Brown: Okay, (2) is schedule 2.

Mr. M. Currie: Is what? Schedule 2?

Mr. Brown: No, hold it.

(2) means that Maritime Electric is going to provide the same services that they provide currently to the people of Prince Edward Island, meaning poles, electricity, power lines if any lines go down. Customer needs - their power goes out in their house or they need service re-connection or stuff like that. They're going to maintain all that. That's a guarantee that we wanted it in there to make sure that: Look, these are the rates and tolls you're going to charge but you're going to continue the service that you're continuing. There's going to be no reduction in service. You're not going to go back to the company and say basically: Wait three or four days for somebody to get re-connected or if there's an ice storm or anything like that, that the delays are going to occur. They're still required by law to provide the service that they're currently serving under the *Electric Power Act*.

(3) basically sets out the rates and tolls as under schedule 2. That is the legislative rates that they're going to charge customers each month from March 1st, 2011 to February 2013.

Chair: This schedule, hon. members, is on page 7 of the act.

Mr. Brown: So these are the rates that are going to be charged. I must say that one of the things we wanted under the legislation,

to make sure that it was good, was that we wanted one rate for the year for customers.

We were extremely disappointed when the rate hearings were done at IRAC, just completed, and within a month - and we all saw it happen - between June's bill and July - July's bill was 13 cents basically and then the August bill was 16 cents. Islanders spoke out quite clearly that they weren't very happy with that adjustment, especially with the IRAC hearings. Basically said there will not be a year-over-year increase.

So one of the principles we wanted to make sure that Islanders were assured of was that their bill was going to be extremely relatively close, month-over-month. If a customer used the same amount of electricity month-over-month, their bill would continue to be the same month-over-month. Because we didn't want Islanders waking up in the morning to an increased bill that maybe they'd have a rough time affording that month. So now Islanders can be assured for the next two years that this will be - 12.5 cents will be the rate in 2011 and 12.5 cents will be the rate in 2012. So their bills will be based on 12.05 cents per kilowatt hour. There'll be no fluctuation from month to month.

Chair: Did you have some questions under (4), hon. member?

Mr. M. Currie: No, that's all right. Go ahead.

Chair: (5) Sections 20, 21, 21.1, 22, 23, 24, and 25 of this Act do not apply to Maritime Electric Company, Limited.

Question.

Mr. Brown: These section are basically sections that, for the rates and tolls, meaning the charges out and how they can be changed and things that could be done to

those. We're making sure that we are setting the rates by schedule 2 and they are the lawful rates for the next two years. So therefore, these sections are not applicable because we've set the rates.

Chair: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: You're getting rid of IRAC here.

Mr. Brown: We're getting rid of IRAC just for the rates and tolls. IRAC will still -

Mr. M. Currie: So who's going to set the rates and tolls? Maritime Electric?

Mr. Brown: No, we're setting them tonight. If this bill passes today, these are the rates. These are the rates. IRAC would have a hearing. They would look at the financial statements. We looked at the financial statements, which is in schedule 1. This Legislature is basically in session right now, acting as IRAC right now. We're doing an IRAC hearing right now. We are legislating the rates here today if this bill passes today.

Mr. M. Currie: But you're asking us, then, to pass something when - I don't know. IRAC could ask to see the prices that they pay. So if that's the case, I want to see the prices that Maritime Electric says that they're paying for a product or the Premier said he bought - whatever it is. If you want us to be fair and pass this, then show us what Quebec bid, show us what Emera bid, and we can say that that's a fair price New Brunswick Power is giving us.

Mr. Brown: Like I said, hon. member, I'll go back to Maritime Electric and if you want to sign a confidentiality agreement and they're willing to show you -

Mr. M. Currie: I won't carry this section based on that, then.

Mr. Brown: What's that?

Mr. M. Currie: I won't carry this section based on that.

Mr. Brown: What do you mean?

Mr. M. Currie: You're asking us to adjudicate now on behalf IRAC or fulfill their role. You're asking us to, on blind faith, trust the Premier to say that this price is good but we won't share it with you. Here's what we're going to (Indistinct). If you want to show us the price, the same as IRAC would see the price Maritime Electric says they'd buy for a product, then we have no problem in going through this bill.

Mr. Brown: Look, IRAC hires an expert to look at their pricing to make sure that it's valid. The people at IRAC don't know if a price is valid or not. We hired an expert called -

Mr. M. Currie: You guys hired Bill Marshall. We don't know him from a hole in -

Mr. Brown: You know Bill Marshall, you know him.

Mr. M. Currie: Know of him

Mr. Brown: You know of him. And if you're questioning Bill Marshall's integrity, in this House, then that's your - you can do that.

Mr. M. Currie: If Bill Marshall was here, I'd question him the same as I question you.

Mr. Brown: Bill Marshall is a well-respected person. I tell you what. You ran it for 10 years. Did you see the prices that were coming in at IRAC? Did you, as industry minister?

Mr. M. Currie: The Premier said he's

buying power.

Mr. Brown: And? Maritime Electric is buying the power. We're not buying the power. I could understand your argument. If we were purchasing the power I could understand your argument.

Mr. M. Currie: You said you were. You said in your opening statement that you were.

Mr. Brown: We used our clout as a government -

Mr. M. Currie: Clout? That's a new word.

Mr. Brown: - to go out and to assist in negotiating this deal. At the end of the day, it is Maritime Electric's deal. We had an independent person look at it to make sure that it was the best for Islanders. That person came back and said it's the best for Islanders. Maritime Electric came back and said it's best for Islanders.

Not only that. A commission is being set up to look into this and they will be reviewing that.

Chair: Shall section (2) carry?

Mr. M. Currie: Wait now.

Chair: I'm just going to go back on the ones (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: No, no. We got to carry it.

Mr. M. Currie: No. I want the minister to know that if he gives us fair and open answers to the questions and not try to skirt around - like, you have an ad in the paper going every day. I don't see Maritime Electric's name on that. You have a website that it's all the province that did this.

Now, if the province wants to take

responsibility for it, when it comes to asking questions about how much you're paying for the power, so we can adjudicate how much Maritime Electric is going to make on it and then what's a fair price for Islanders -

An Hon. Member:

Mr. M. Currie: Well now, don't be getting touchy over there. We're just asking fair questions.

Mr. Brown: Hon. member?

Mr. M. Currie: You want fair? I can soon get to my feet here.

Mr. Brown: Hon. member.

Mr. M. Currie: Somebody bring me the podium. Might as well bring me the podium.

Mr. Brown: Hon. member -

Mr. M. Currie: Yes.

Mr. Brown: Okay.

Mr. M. Currie: Get me the podium.

Mr. Brown: Get the podium. On Schedule 1 -

Mr. M. Currie: I'm going to have to. You don't want to answer the questions. You're going to get a tuning.

Mr. Brown: Could you look up Schedule 1, page 6?

Chair: Page 6, hon. members.

Mr. Brown: Okay.

Mr. M. Currie: Here we go, okay.

Mr. Brown: So the distribution. Go ahead.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you.

Now, minister, I think that this is a very important bill. It's an act that's important to all Islanders. I can't understand why you want to not provide information in regards to the pricing. You're indicating that you're eliminating IRAC here today and their position to adjudicate fair and equal prices for Islanders. You're saying that we as legislators are going to decide.

I certainly am not going to decide here today on what is a fair price, based on the fact that you will not share with us the prices. If you're going to go out and do an open system to tender and solicit for prices and indicate how many trips you made away and everything else, that's fine. I appreciate the fact that you're trying to do that for Islanders. But all we want is for you to be fair and for Islanders to place trust in your Premier and in his accord that he calls for Islanders. So that's how we wanted to start here, is indicate - I asked the other day for reasonable answers to questions and you want to skirt around them.

I think all Islanders are indicating is that if the market is already deciding that the prices are starting to reduce anyway because the demand is falling, then let's see that. If that's somewhere around 10%, then we want to break this down a little bit and see how much we, as taxpayers, are going to be on the hook for some of the expenditures that are going to take place here and see if we are getting a fair deal.

That's all you have to do is show us that if they're paying six or seven cents for the product and it costs so much to bring it across the cable and line losses and so on and so forth, and here's a fair price, then that's all we're asking.

If you don't want to share that information with us, it's going to be awful difficult for

us to carry any of these sections and allow this bill to be passed. It's just not fair.

If you want to go back, you can look at what you announced a number of years ago. A 10 point plan for electricity. You know that that's been a failure. The Premier announced that with great fanfare. He announced 500 megawatts of power and, again, he left out a lot of the details. He left out details like there was no cable then and there was no way to export the power. There was - I didn't know you were allowed to bring props into the House.

Mr. Brown: They're not props. They're charts. You're debating.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Chair, what we have is a premier and a government that make great announcements.

It sounded good, but when you started to bore into the details you found out that there was serious problems with the announcements. I think sometimes Islanders are a little bit duped by this government when they make a lot of press releases and they don't back it up with facts and figures. That's all we're looking for here today is that the government of the day, the Premier especially, would indicate that he would be fair with Islanders. If he wants us to take him at his word, especially after a few failed events such as the wind power, the 10point plan that's gone by the wayside - it's busted, it's failed, it's not going to work - he wants us now to place our trust in him. I think that's unfortunate.

Now's the time for the Premier and the government to come clean and to indicate that they want to be fair with Islanders and will show us the prices and go through it. But it's clear that they want to ram this through. They do not want to be fair with us here and just share some of the information so we can have a better understanding, and

if we are asked we don't have to say we never got the details. We'd say: We heard it, we understood it, it's a bill that is going to have the numbers in it that's reflected in it, and at the present time. That's fair. But if we are not going to get the details and we're going to be led astray by the Premier of the day in regards to this agreement, then that's not fair.

I think that a lot of people probably don't have the best feelings about IRAC, but at least they know IRAC is there to adjudicate and offer a fair hearing for anybody. Especially on fuel prices and what we pay for electricity. If you see right today on fuel, because of IRAC, prices are probably lower here than they are anywhere in Atlantic Canada or maybe eastern Canada. It just shows that they're doing their job. But by taking them out of the equation here, by taking them of the equation as this government has done, it's allowing Maritime Electric to set their own rates and then go back to government with a management and operating agreement to look at the expenses and so forth.

As the minister said, he wants us here now on the floor to set the rates. I'm not going to be responsible for setting rates if I don't know what I'm paying for a product. It's pretty hard to figure that out when the minister will not share that with us, coming in here and saying: I can't share that with you, although he and the CEO were out on the road getting these prices. I can believe and understand that if this was Maritime Electric's - but this is not Maritime Electric's. We're involved in this right up to the neck. Because we're going to be on the hook for major expenditures and we're backstopping Maritime Electric who's a profit-making monopoly in this province.

That's unfair for the minister to not offer us the prices. The people here are not being fair. We want to be fair and we want to hear

the fair prices. Now that's all we want and you can share that with us. But I don't think it's right to come in here and indicate that: You trust me, it's not going to happen. You, we're -

Mr. Sheridan: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: They're just going to keep me going here, that's fine. Now, when you get a chance you can get to the floor. I have the floor. Thank you very much.

Chair: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters has the floor.

Mr. M. Currie: If you guys want to take your little cracks, well, we'll be here for a long time. That's fine. This is your bill, your accord. You have to take responsibility for what you're doing. You cannot come in here and try and sneak something through on the people of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Brown: We're not sneaking anything through.

Mr. M. Currie: They're just sneaking stuff through here all the time and they got caught at it now, and now they have to answer.

All we want to see on this section alone is the price. The price that you're paying for electricity. The minister will not share that with us. He's done some sort of hidden handshake deal with Fred O'Brien and they made him ink something and that's unfortunate that that happens, but they have a right to share with us the prices and you should share that with us. I can't understand why you would be led into believe that you can't share. Because you're asking Islanders to step up to the plate and sign on for all this debt and you don't want us to be part of it.

So it's unfortunate, minister, but I think you have to share those numbers with us, and if you're prepared to do that, then we'll

probably make some progress here on the bill. But if you're not prepared to do that, then we're going to be here for a long time. I just can't for the life of me think that you have to -

Mr. Sheridan: (Indistinct).

Chair: He's allowed to debate.

Mr. M. Currie: You have to indicate to us that we have no right to see the price. We have no right to know what other companies have bid for us to figure out for ourselves that it was a fair price.

Chair: In Committee you can do this.

Mr. M. Currie: The minister is obligated, I think, to come forward with the price and share with Islanders so that we know.

If we're going to try and figure out what a rate of return is for Maritime Electric after the price they paid and after the line loss and transmission cost, and if it works out, that's fine. But if you want to, and the Premier, hide from Islanders the price, then we do have a problem. If you're going to sneak and do things like that, and protect the shareholders of Maritime Electric and not look after the taxpayers of this province, then you have a problem. Now if you want to take yourselves off the floor and go and rethink this and have a conversation afterwards, I have no problem with that. But if you going to think you're going to come in here and ask us to set tolls and rates for Islanders, and you're not going to share the information with us, then we're not doing our job and you know that, minister. That's not fair to the rest of the colleagues in here that they would participate in something like that.

Because I know we're not going to deal like that. But I did indicate to you that if you want to start being open and transparent and

tell us what the price is that all the other utilities offered to the province, then we can adjudicate if it's a fair price.

Now minister, that's a fair ask. I know it's easy for you to come in here and say: I signed a confidentiality agreement. That's fine if you're working for Maritime Electric. But you work for the taxpayers, and it's our money you're going to use to come in here and backstop Maritime Electric. I think you admitted out there it's \$220 million and climbing because we have some more figures now and they're going to come forward.

Mr. Brown: Oh good! Go with it! Your plan was 400 million. You and Jamie had a plan, 400 million.

Mr. M. Currie: It's not hard - I don't have a plan. This is your accord. You're on the floor now, you're in government. This is your accord and you said that you were going to treat Islanders fairly.

I think the only one that's getting treated fairly here, Madam Chair, is Maritime Electric, and they have a monopoly, and you're using our taxpayers money to cushy up to Maritime Electric and Fred O'Brien, and Fred's going to have the best Christmas bonus he ever got based on the minister here.

He's certainly been gracious. It's no wonder Fred was smiling in all the press releases because the government of the day has been gracious to him and he has been very good to him. Fred doesn't have to sit in here and answer any questions. He's up there on the fifth floor over there and just counting the bonuses that are going to come in.

Minister, it's very simple. I think that you know we're going to ask some questions. It's just a simple question for us to figure out if this is a fair price. If you think that

we're going to try and pass a schedule of rates for Islanders based on the fact: I can't tell you because I signed some secret deal, and just trust me, well, we trusted the Premier on that 10 point plan for energy. You know where that is? That's a bust.

Mr. Brown: Still going. We're negotiating.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay, there we go. Now thank you very much. Still negotiating -

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: - with the RFP for the private development. You told me the other day that's all done.

Mr. Brown: Yeah, it is. The RFP is done -

Mr. M. Currie: You know what? They haven't heard a word from government if it's cancelled. Hasn't heard a word. I didn't do the negotiating.

Mr. Brown: You tell any of your buddies to come and see me. They (Indistinct).

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: I have the floor.

Chair: One at a time.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: That's right. Madam Chair, here's a prime example.

They expect people to operate in good faith, the government. Now the government goes out on this RFP they did, they're about two years into it, and they promised they were going to do wind development, 130 megawatts. Then they stood up one day and said: That ain't going to kind of work any more, the hundred. That just doesn't work.

We might try the 30. They had six developers. Now they had what they called a fairness auditor in there.

Mr. Brown: That was a good idea.

Mr. M. Currie: Fairness auditor. We're going to get to see how fair he was.

Mr. Brown: That was a good idea.

Mr. M. Currie: Anyway, he indicated at that developers' meeting, he was asked a number of times by the developers -

Mr. Brown: By Jamie.

Mr. M. Currie: - by the developers: Are we competing against the province of PEI when it comes to wind development? The answer was: Wayne, could you answer that? Mr. MacQuarrie, would you answer that question?

Mr. Brown: I'll answer the questions. What's the question?

Mr. M. Currie: The question was: When it was asked at a developers' meeting, would any of us - are we ever going to be competing against the government of PEI for wind development?

Premier Ghiz: Shame on you. Let's have an election over this.

Ms. Bertram: Yes, let's go to the polls. Let's ask Islanders.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: What's the answer?

Mr. Brown: What's the answer?

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. Brown: The 10 point plan was quite

clear.

Mr. M. Currie: So there's no answer. So, Madam Chair, the minister I think at the time indicated that there'd be no competition from the government sources, that we were going to go through this process of an RFP for wind development on Prince Edward Island, and: Trust in us, trust in our Premier, that this is going to take place.

Now you want us to trust you on a price here now, and you go out and take six developers across PEI and all over North America to come in and bid and they're supposed to negotiate in good faith.

Mr. Brown: We are negotiating (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: No, you just said the other day that that's all cancelled and that's all done. So these people have been led to believe that they're still negotiating and yet you've signed a PPA with Maritime Electric for wind development with the PEI Energy Corporation. You indicated to us that you had a fairness auditor in there.

Mr. Brown: That was a good idea.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah, he was fair.

Mr. Brown: He was fair to Islanders, that was good.

Mr. M. Currie: He was fair.

Mr. Brown: He was fair to Islanders.

Mr. M. Currie: That's a good point. Because all the hundreds of thousands of dollars a day that accumulated these companies on preparing themselves for a bid are led to believe now - they don't know if they got it or haven't got it, but only what they read in the paper that's it's all terminated. Their investment is gone down

the drain based on the fairness auditor and the government and the Premier of the province indicating that this was part of this 10 point plan, the dream that the Premier had.

It's a 50% rise in rates. Certainly you're going to have to do something to take the burden off.

Mr. Brown: Come on. (Indistinct) joke.

Mr. M. Currie: The people on Prince Edward Island don't know if they're going to be allowed to turn their Christmas lights on this year. Christmas is going to be held in the daytime in this province. With this Premier, it's all going to be in the daytime. There'll be no Christmas lights this year in Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Brown: There'll be no Christmas at night?

Mr. M. Currie: No. There are no lights.

Madam Chair, it's unfortunate that the minister will not share information with us.

But he wants us to place our trust in him. He believes that we should warm up to him and say: Trust me and the Premier. You have to believe in me. Believe in him. It's unfortunate that he tried to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Chair: Order, please!

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you, Madam Chair.

That was very kind of you. They were getting out of hand. They know the difference, and it's unfortunate that (Indistinct) -

Mr. Brown: I know you're going to talk it out, but you don't want Islanders to know

how good this deal is.

Mr. M. Currie: They can use the taxpayers money to go out and pretend that they did these deals. Pretend that they went to these meetings and pretend they have secret handshake deals (Indistinct) -

Mr. Brown: There's no handshakes. These hands are clean.

Mr. M. Currie: - and it's a letter of confidentiality and I can't share with you the prices for electricity, but trust in me. Even though we failed on the 10 point plan.

Mr. Brown: No, we didn't. That's still a go

Mr. M. Currie: Even though we failed on the RFP and we failed on bringing the cable to Prince Edward Island, we failed on Churchill.

Mr. Brown: Hey, we're going to get that cable. We had it.

Mr. M. Currie: We failed on Churchill Falls and we failed on tidal power. We know that we have to place trust in the Premier on that. He's a man of his word. He's intent on being fair and honest to Islanders, but we have trouble trusting him. We do so. We have a lot of trouble trusting him. A lot of trouble now with trusting the minister. Sometimes we can jam him up a little bit and he'll give us some information.

Mr. Brown: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) gag order on.

Mr., Brown: He's got no gag order.

Mr. M. Currie: He'll wear his knees out over at the confession box (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: Let's extend the hour, we'll get her done tonight.

Mr. M. Currie: We might just extend the hour here, I'm just getting on a roll here.

Mr. Brown: Great. People can turn their televisions on to Cable 10. Send the word out.

Mr. M. Currie: I think the only ones they're interested in protecting here is the shareholders of Fortis and that's unfortunate. Because I thought this government and this Premier indicated that they wanted to place Islanders first. They wanted to look after them and ensure - and the member that's sitting there now, the minister, he indicated a number of times that he was going to buy Maritime Electric: If I ever get into that place of government and I'm the minister of energy, I'm buying it and I'm putting the run to every one of them.

You've been there for three years now and all you're doing is huffing and puffing. You're not doing a thing.

Mr. Brown: We're lowering rates. You're mad, you're really mad.

Mr. M. Currie: You're just telling us that.

Mr. Brown: You're so mad we're lowering rates.

Mr. M. Currie: You're telling us that.

Mr. Brown: This really burns you up. It does burn you up, doesn't it? It burns you up.

Mr. M. Currie: (Indistinct) that we'd love to know what the prices are. He was going to buy Maritime Electric and he was going to take it over and he was going to run it all himself and he was going to put Bruce MacIsaac in charge of it.

Mr. Brown: That'd make a good appointment.

Mr. M. Currie: We're having trouble figuring out - he makes all these statements. He promised us he was going to get us a great deal at Churchill Falls and he made two or three trips to Newfoundland. We haven't seen anything on that.

Mr. Brown: Yes we did, yes we did. Danny announced Churchill Falls.

Mr. M. Currie: He ran over to Nova Scotia and -

Mr. Brown: I went to Churchill Falls and I said: Danny, this would be a good deal.

Mr. M. Currie: He went over there to Nova Scotia on a low tide and he said there was going to be tidal power coming, I watched the tide come in over (Indistinct) turbines, and I'm in on that. Sign me up for that, ladies and gentlemen in the province of PEI. We'll ante up for that. That was another one.

Then I think he was going to truck natural gas in here. I can't affirm that, but -

Mr. Brown: No. Your old buddy tried it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. M. Currie: He was going to get (Indistinct) MacDonald to truck in the gas down here. That was a good one. He promised that one. Then he was going to get us a cable up in Ottawa.

Mr. Brown: We had a cable. Under the Liberals.

Mr. M. Currie: As I said here one day -

Mr. Brown: I even supported the (Indistinct). He (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: He went on a rendezvous over (Indistinct) one day with a luxury car and a gold credit card and he came back -

Mr. Brown: That's some car.

Mr. M. Currie: - about five minutes with Jack Keir, now defeated, gone home -

Mr. Brown: Jack who?

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah, he's gone. He was trying to do the same thing this government is. This Premier is trying to do the same thing they did in New Brunswick, Shawn Graham. One-term government. Come up with a great big announcement, and he's just trying to mirror himself off Shawn Graham.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)!

Mr. Brown: We'll call an election right now.

Mr. M. Currie: We saw what happened to Shawn Graham. The heave-ho.

Mr. Brown: Wayne, can we go?

Mr. M. Currie: This minister here, he was over in Fredericton -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)!

Chair: Hon. members.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Chair, this minister was over in Fredericton and he came back home and he went to the media right behind me here) and he told them, this is the gospel truth, he said: I'm going to sue the federal government and I'm going to take every penny out of their pocket. Believe my and trust in me because I'm doing that.

See, he wants us to believe and trust in him today. The Premier over there is the same thing. But we found out the next day or so the minister of energy over there said: I met with that guy for five minutes and I don't remember anything about a lawsuit. But the minister over here, he came home and he

said: I'm suing Ottawa and I'm taking them for every penny over this Point Lepreau. It's not fair, and I'm sticking up for Islanders.

We haven't heard yet how that lawsuit is going.

Mr. Brown: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Not bad. I got to say, Madam Chair, I got to give the minister credit -

Mr. Brown: The new energy minister.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Chair, you got to give him credit because he's got the gall of 10 men. He will go around and come back here and make headline news and he gets on the CBC, the *Compass* -

Mr. Brown: No, the *Guardian*. The *Guardian's* always right.

Mr. M. Currie: Well, *The Guardian* always covers it.

Anyway, what he had done was said: I'm suing Ottawa. He said that I'm going to get all the money out of you. Then he turns around here last week and he jumps on a plane. He took a night bag with him, whatever. He scooted up to Ottawa and he said: I'm the guy that just wanted to sue you for every penny, but if you'd only give me 45 million, I'd appreciate it. Now I got to say, you do have gall to march up to Ottawa and do that after making front headline news across Canada.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)!

Mr. M. Currie: We know who he's looking out for. He's looking out for himself and Fred O'Brien. That's all he's looking out for.

Mr. Brown: Fred (Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: It's disappointing that the minister would come in here and try to pull this charade off and sneak things through and not be fair to Islanders. He always indicated that - I think one of the statements he said: The lights went out in PEI when New Brunswick plus 10 was done.

Mr. Brown: That's right.

Mr. M. Currie: That's right, Madam Chair.

Mr. Brown: He's getting me back (Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: The minister of transportation, he went on and rambled on, the Premier rambled on about New Brunswick plus 10. If we only had -

Mr. Brown: We're back to NB plus 10. Look at the charts.

Mr. M. Currie: If we had New Brunswick plus 10 we'd be fine.

Mr. Brown: Welcome back, NB plus 10.

Mr. M. Currie: If that was the case then the minister should have brought in -

Mr. Brown: New Brunswick plus seven, we're at. New Brunswick plus seven. Even better.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Chair, he should have brought in New Brunswick plus 10.

Mr. Brown: Carried. Let's go to the polls.

Mr. M. Currie: He always indicated that: As soon as I get into government, the first thing I'm going to do when I get into government is I'm going to change that act back to New Brunswick plus 10 and I'm going to look out for Islanders. I'd like to

know how many Cabinet sessions that you went into since you done that.

But I did like the comments that the spokesman for NB Power said the other day, that we're happy to have PEI on because they subsidize our rates. The minister here will not tell us what kind of a great rate he and the Premier negotiated. They certainly do not want to tell us anything, but the New Brunswick plus 10 was interesting. I don't know why the minister of huff and puff wouldn't come in any given Tuesday and indicate: I'm bringing that back in, I'm going to protect Islanders. But he never did.

All he did was strike a deal, a back room deal, a hidden handshake deal with Maritime Electric and they won't share that information with us so with that, I guess -

Mr. Brown: Are you going to extend the hour?

Mr. M. Currie: I think that I would like to make an amendment to the bill.

Mr. Brown: Okay, he's going to make an amendment.

Chair: Order, please!

Mr. M. Currie: I'd like to make an amendment to the bill, seconded by the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, that:

Upon application by the Government of Prince Edward Island, the commission may, by order, amend Schedule 2 to vary the rates, tolls and charges as set out therein in order to have rates, toll charges, equal to New Brunswick plus 10.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: Order, please!

Mr. Brown: Raise rates. He wants to raise

rates. NB plus 7.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)!

Mr. M. Currie: I want him to tell us what it is. We don't know what the price (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: Amendment to raise rates.

Chair: Hon. members, there's an amendment on the floor.

Mr. M. Currie: I want you to vote on it.

Mr. Brown: We can't support raising rates.

Mr. M. Currie: We're not supporting rates. (Indistinct).

Chair: Hon. members.

Mr. M. Currie: We don't know what the price is, you will not tell us.

Mr. Brown: I got the price.

Mr. M. Currie: Well, flush you out. Let's flush you out, then, tell us what the price is.

Question.

Chair: Hon. members, there's an amendment on the floor.

Is there anyone who would like to speak?

The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I think we are extremely fortunate to finally have a minister who's been able to reduce down rates in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Chair: The hour has been called.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: Thanks for getting that in.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: I move the title.

You just say the word, we'll go to the polls.

Chair: Order, please!

Mr. Minister.

Mr. Brown: Yes. I'm just so excited with lowering rates.

I move the title that we're lowering rates.

Chair: *Electric Power (Electricity -Rate Reduction) Amendment Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Minister.

Mr. Brown: I move the enacting clause to lower rates.

Chair: *Electric Power (Electricity -Rate Reduction) Amendment Act.*

Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the - yeah, I thought we were calling the Speaker back.

Mr. Brown: Oh no, we approved the bill, he did.

Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: Excuse me, Madam Chair, that bill isn't on the floor.

(Indistinct) just announced.

Chair: No, we were talking to the amendment.

Mr. Bagnall: No, but he just moved to carry a bill that wasn't on the floor.

Mr. Brown: Yeah, the electric power rates to reduce rates.

Chair: Could you please read that again, hon. member? I think there is something wrong there.

We're just calling the Speaker back, hon. member.

Mr. Brown: Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Minister, you did a good job.

Mr. Brown: Oh, we have to leave. We're not going to reduce rates today?

Chair: Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Electric Power (Electricity-Rate Reduction) Amendment Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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