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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



A

Speaker: Hon. Kathleen M. Casey

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Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everybody to the gallery. We've got some new folks in here today. The McAlduffs are down from Tignish, the beautiful community up there. I also see a great Island singer, Joe McKenna, great to see Joe here.

We also have in the gallery today Lori Edwards of Rustico. I had the opportunity to get my photo taken with - out front. She is actually travelling across the province with Kirk McKinnon and Kerri Wynne MacCloud of the morning show, getting her pictures taken all over the province in an effort to try and win tickets to a Taylor Swift concert, who she says her daughter is a huge fan of. So I'd like to wish her all the best.

Actually, you could be lucky that it's not the real Kirk and Kerri Wynne, or unlucky, depending whose opinion you're looking at it from. We know that Kerri Wynne's a spectacular singer so I'm sure if you were stuck in the car with Kerri Wynne for a while you wouldn't even have to turn on the radio. She could fill the air, no problem, in there with her great musical voice.

So I'd like to wish Lori - and of course Jackie Arsenault from Tyne Valley is participating as well, and I'd like to wish them both all the best, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

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 our guests in the gallery today as well, especially Joe McKenna. He's a wonderful gentleman from my district. A great worker, a good singer, and a wonderful person to help in all ways.

I'd also hope that the minister of environment and energy had good luck out in Morell this morning as the fishing season got started (Indistinct).

I'd also like to say hello to two people that watch every day from Summerside, Helen and Ann. Finally, I'd like to wish congratulations to Mr. Steven Han and his wife. Both were former bankers in South Korea and they've actually opened a restaurant here in Charlottetown called Seoul Food. I'd like to say hello to Mr. Choy who treated a number of us to dinner last night. I encourage everybody here to try the restaurant.

Thank you.

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

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

I rise today to welcome guests to the gallery, and a special welcome to Paul McAlduff and his wife Brenda. Paul is, some of you may know, a very dedicated, committed trustee with the Western School Board and was part of a wonderful ceremony at governor's house acknowledging the Western School Board for their commitment and leadership. So welcome, Paul.

A special welcome to Wes. I was in to see my dad this morning, get my shoes shined, and he said he'd probably cross paths with me some time today. So, glad to see him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everybody in the gallery, and especially Eddie Lund. Saw Eddie last night out at a very successful AGM for the hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park.

I'd also like to say hello to everybody out in West Royalty-Springvale, and especially to Arnold and Joan MacRae who are both celebrating their 80th birthday in the same year. They have an open house at the workshop in Arnold's lane, Saturday, April 17th from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Also, I'd like to give belated birthday greetings to Calvin Mol who had a 50-year sign on his lawn yesterday.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and I wish everybody a wonderful day today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

It's a pleasure to rise, too, and I welcome everyone who's joining us in the public gallery here today. I see Heather MacAulay up there from NewCap Radio, a bright and talented young lady, formerly from the first district, I guess you would say, now living in the city here. But there's always lots of

room for her back out in the first district for sure.

Premier Ghiz: They have radio service now.

Mr. Campbell: Absolutely, they do have radio service up in the first district, and in district 27, I might add.

Also, when I'm on the topic of talented young people from the first district, I'd also like to recognize our Canada Games bronze medalist, Kurt McCormack who, last night, was named intercollegiate male athlete of the year and also won the gold medal for triple jump at Dickinson State University in North Dakota, their Blue Hawks games recently.

As well, I'd like to congratulate two young gentlemen from the first district, Nathan Conway and Kyler Burke, and their coach, Larry LeBlanc. Nathan and Kyler both recently medaled at the Canadian powerlifting championships. So a lot of good things from our young people in the first district.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

First of all, I'd like to welcome Eddie Lund and the McAlduffs and Lori and Kirk up there, and acknowledge also that Jackie Arsenault from my constituency is travelling around. I've been checking out the pictures on Facebook with their travels across the Island.

I'd like to say hello to Bob Steele who is watching on EastLink. Had a nice call from

him last night.

Just like to recognize a couple of young people from my district as well, Breanne Lewis, Hugo Regimbauld, Kathleen Cousins, and Lydia Enman, who won gold medals from the Lennox Island Judo Club at the competition in Saint John.

I wish everyone in the constituency and those watching across the Island a great day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. LeClair: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to welcome everybody to the gallery today and those watching at home. I want to especially welcome Paul and Brenda McAlduff from Tignish. Paul is a great Western School Board trustee and Brenda is a great president of the riding of Tignish-Palmer Road and District 27. It's great to see you hear today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to rise in the House and bring greetings to the gallery.

I see some familiar faces without question. There's some folks that are probably the first time. It's also nice to see the youth in the gallery. I see two toddlers up there, which is great, and it's very nice to see them.

Also, the South Shore Villa, which is located in Crapaud, is a seniors' facility.

Certainly my mother-in-law lives there now and she's getting along great. But also, there's another lady that lives there that is having a special day, and it is actually her birthday. It is Lila Campbell who is formerly from Cape Traverse and farmed with her husband there for many years. Lila is 103 years old today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Webster: As we say in the country, Madam Speaker, there's a saying we have that she's as sharp as a tack.

This lady is sharp as a tack. She watches what's going on. She knows what's going on. She's a great lady with a great perspective on life. So we want to wish her very well.

Certainly, I'd like to bring greetings as well to the tillers of the land who are starting their farm process in the days as it warms up. Greetings and welcome to everyone in EastLink.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to rise and welcome everyone to our public gallery today. I would like to also take the opportunity to welcome Lori Edwards who is here as part of the competition with radio for the tickets that hopefully she will win. Want to welcome her as a member of our district to the Legislature.

The festival this summer, we're anticipating great numbers. Again, it was very important for our district last year. Taylor Swift and

many others will only bring many more numbers to the North Shore, to the Cavendish region, and want today to thank the tourism operators out there that are doing lots to do renovations and upkeep to their properties, and to our operators and to our agriculture and fishers out there too who are preparing for the season.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacKinley: I'd like to welcome all the viewers watching us here today, and keep the phone calls coming in. It's great, sort of picks up here when they say some of the great questions that they're handling on this side because we know what happens on that side when they were here.

Also, another thing is I'd like to welcome Art Howard - his 88th birthday today - and congratulate him on that. A strong Liberal supporter from District 16. Me and the member from Crapaud-Hazel Grove had the honour of having breakfast with him this morning.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, also, would like to rise and welcome everyone to the gallery. I noticed in the gallery I have a lady from my district there, Dot Robinson's in, watching the proceedings. Welcome.

Also, I'd like to give a welcome to the fishermen. The traps are on the wharves. They're getting ready. The excitement is

starting to get there now. They're preparing for the lobster season. The biggest question now that they have announced whether they were going to get a price and whether they're going to get government support to look after trying to get a price for them. So their major concern out there is the season coming up and getting ready.

Plus the Island farmers down at Kings County, they've been on the land now for a week. They're planting potatoes, they're planting grain. They're into it full blast. You wouldn't believe how sandy the land is down there because the other day you would - watching behind the machines, the dust was just flying. The ground is so dry that it's going to be maybe a difficult season if we don't get some rain because we got very little snow in the winter.

So with that I wish the farmers and the fishermen a good season, and everyone watching today, enjoy the proceedings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Greenan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise in the House and send greetings to the people that are in the gallery, and also those watching on EastLink, and especially the good people from District 22 Summerside-St. Eleanors.

Special recognition to our Easter Seals ambassador, Colton Matheson, who's just finishing up his second day of his six-day tour of Island schools. I had the pleasure yesterday, along with a couple of other Rotarians from the Summerside Rotary Club, to accompany him on a nine-school tour. He is certainly an ambassador and he has warmed the hearts of a lot of people. He's quite a showman. His goal is to

become a millionaire and perhaps be a politician. Hats off to Colton, and I encourage everybody to support the Easter Seals.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to rise today and welcome everyone to the gallery, especially the McAduffs from District 27. I'd like to say hello to everyone at home in the district, Evangeline-Miscouche, and a special hello to Lee Winchester who lives at the top of my street and watches the proceedings every day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

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

2010 angling season open

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is with great pleasure that I rise today in the Legislature to mark the opening of the 2010 angling season across Prince Edward Island. We are privileged to be home to some of the best recreational fishing and the most beautiful natural areas.

Anglers of all ages will try their luck at their favourite, and sometimes secret, locations, in pursuit of Prince Edward Island's principal sport fish, brook trout, which are found in virtually every stream, large or

small. Brook trout which spend time in salt water are the most prized catch by anglers. These are known as sea trout and can reach sizes up to seven pounds or more.

Madam Speaker, and fellow members, fishing is a great way to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and spend time with others who enjoy the outdoors. Fishing is relatively easy and inexpensive. A simple rod and reel with bait and bobber will get you started. It's also a time for families to spend time together, and most important, fishing is fun.

In closing, I'd like us to take this opportunity to wish anglers across the Island good luck, including the hon. Ministers of Environment, Energy and Forestry and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, as they embark on another season in hopes of catching the big one.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Curling

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The community of O'Leary is renowned for its potatoes and holds the title of Hockeyville PEI, but we are also becoming quickly famous for our competitiveness in the sport of curling.

The Maple Leaf Curling Club in O'Leary, now known as the club of Island champions, recently has had two junior curling championships which were representing PEI in the Atlantic championships.

The Tiffany Sweet rink included teammates

Chantal Clements, Kathleen O'Mera and Laura O'Mera. Also the team of Matt MacLean, it would include Marshall Smallman, Kevin Gallant and Alan MacLean, won the provincials to earn that particular right.

Also, the Amanda MacLean rink, which included Emily Gray and a couple of others whose names escape me at the moment, won the provincial under-17 championships, which earns her team the right to represent PEI in the 2011 Canada Winter Games in Halifax.

Not to be outdone by O'Leary junior curlers, but the Clair Sweet rink, which includes teammates Bob Matheson, Cliff Poirier and Wayne Arsenault, won the provincial men's senior championships and recently finished fifth in the men's national seniors competition.

On May 8th the Maple Leaf Curling Club is hosting a major fundraising dinner celebrating 30 years as a club and all the fond memories that have occurred over that period. As MLA for O'Leary-Inverness, I encourage all curling advocates from across PEI to purchase a ticket and support O'Leary in its winning ways.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Montague fire victims

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to announce that the people of Montague are coming together to help one another. The community atmosphere in Montague is unlike any other and their kind actions do not surprise me one bit.

Just a couple of weeks ago a tragic fire destroyed the home of Lori Lund and her three sons. The fire damaged almost all of Lori's belongings and, unfortunately, she did not have any insurance. Immediately, volunteers within the community decided to host a benefit for Lori.

Lori is a single mother with three sons. She works hard every day, both with her career and with her children. Lori, herself, is an active volunteer. For years she's been active with the minor hockey and soccer teams.

Those who know Lori describe her as caring and kind. Her many friends within the community are stepping up to help ease the burden. Even 11-year-old Cody Taylor, who is a friend of the family, is raising money through planning a hockey tournament. Although there is much to be done, starting with the clean-up and eventually working to remodelling her home, I am confident that the people of Montague will get it done.

I am so proud to be from Montague today. I hope that we can rebuild Lori's home as quickly as possible. With that said, I encourage everyone to attend Lori's benefit on April 17th at the Montague Wellness Centre.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Budget lockup for interest groups

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My first question today is to the Premier.

Mr. Premier, you may recall last spring I asked you about providing a secondary budget lockup to be given to various interest groups. At that time you said it was a good idea and you would make sure that you adjust things for this year. Mr. Premier, can you tell us today, have you made arrangement for the second lockup for the interests groups?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I appreciate the question. Off the top of my head, I'm not sure. I know that last year I looked into the issue and I think it came down to a resource issue. But I'll be more than happy, and I appreciate - who knows, I'm not sure exactly the day of the budget, it might be next Thursday - but I appreciate the heads up and I'll check into it again

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, same question back to the Premier.

Mr. Premier, nearly all jurisdictions in Canada are actually doing this today. This has been a request from interest groups, that they would like to have a lockdown so they could be prepared to make comments, the same as the media are. If you could look into this and make it happen we'd appreciate it. Because I think you made a commitment last year to me that you would do this.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you.

The hon. member's right, it did make some sense, especially if they're doing it in other jurisdictions. I will confer with the people in the Department of Finance and Municipal

Affairs again, and if the resources are available - you know, if they say that it's impossible to do I'm not going to force them to do it. But I'll ask them as Premier, to the people in the department of finance, to see if it is possible, and if it is I'm sure they'll be able to accommodate it.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

E-health contracts

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you.

My next question is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General.

Mr. Minister, when you were the minister that was dealing with e-health contracts, and when these contracts were given out, you were the minister at the time. My question is to you: Would you have any idea why the minister today would not want to be forthcoming with those and try to hide behind the Legislature -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - today as the reason why she's not. Can you answer that question for us today? Why she might be hiding?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am glad that the Member from Montague-Kilmuir, after over a week that the auditor's report has been tabled in this Legislature, is asking questions surrounding it. We're not hiding anything as a government. What I tabled last Friday in this Legislature was materials that were requested outside of this Legislature. There are guidelines that we follow outside of this Legislature.

But hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, this program, the electronic health records, it's going to be a great program here on Prince Edward Island. Our government got this program back on the rails, and I want to thank the former minister for his leadership. Back in 2007 -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: Because, hon. member, this previous government, this was off the rails. There was Program Renewal back in 2005, they underestimated the cost of this, Madam Speaker.

Our government is not hiding anything and I will be able to provide to the member what he requests today, as much as I can, and I will go back to the department with whatever else he asks of, and see what else I can bring back, within this rail and within the privilege of this Legislature, but respecting all the parties involved, and the privilege that exists in this Legislature.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm glad to hear the minister make a comment like that because she's flip-flopped on the issue all week. One day the contracts are not allowed to be released to the public. The next day they would have to be FOIPPed. The next day: We'll release them if the opposition should ask for.

Minister, you're wrong. You can release that information any day you want. You don't have to wait for anybody to ask for it. Minister, I gave you a few days to see if you would come forward without us having to bring this to your attention, to ask for it. But you decided not to. You wanted to hide. So what is in these documents that makes you want to hide so badly that you didn't want to

table them?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't think the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir has actually asked the question. So I'm wondering what piece of information he is requesting today.

Again, I bring back, there is a process. We have freedom of access to information in this province, and within this rail we have privilege, and that, as a legislature, we have that. So I implore the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, if he has a question, direct it specific to what his request is.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, yes. I would ask you, minister, if you would release all contracts that are for the CERNER system since you became, your government, became minister in 2007 -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I'll even go farther than that, since the program started.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: Would you release every contract -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: - and the dollar value of each one, and the untendered ones that you (Indistinct)? Will you release all of those documents today?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, today the question has been asked, and I will, as minister responsible, during Tabling of Documents, table, at my discretion here today, the contract date, the work referenced under section three of the AG report, the company name, work description, contract fee terms, and the additional information that can be provided, and the amounts of those contracts and work sourced during both the previous administration and our administration.

I believe the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir in his question also alluded to the contracts themselves. Our department is going through all the contracts. I will be reporting back to this Legislature with information that I can table from those contracts, Madam Speaker, and I will be making what I can be available to this House and to the public of Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, to the same minister.

In the information that you tabled there were two untendered contracts. What was so important about those contracts that you couldn't tender them, and why were they issued out and how much were they for?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I will table this document during Tabling of Documents. There is a policy within the Treasury Board policy. When there is urgency within departments that we can go and look to source resource people in emergency, urgency situations.

When we came into power in 2007 we had urgency to get this back on the rails because we had software in April of 2008 that was going offline, and people's medical records were going to be null and void if we didn't get this back on track. So we took the reins, the former minister took the leadership, and we got this back on the rails. We've seen great progress on the EHR, the CIS, which is the Clinical Information System, and 23 of the 24 operating systems within that are operating today, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the minister, will you table the terms of references for those two contracts and the values of them?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Again, Madam Speaker, I'm tabling today all the work, regardless of contracts or not, that was referenced in the AG report during both governments, and it goes right back to August 15th, 2005, where the previous administration very much underestimated the cost factor around this program.

I think it's important that Islanders note that we as a government here on PEI, as Islanders, the federal government put money out there through Canada Health Infoway, and they wanted all Canadians, by 2016, to be part of this. By the end of 2010, which is this year, they wanted at least half of Canadians to be part of this type of a system. So we've seen the need to do this. We could not sit back. It was an investment.

But I did some research and went back to when we were in opposition. My hon. colleague, the Minister of Environment,

Energy and Forestry, and the questions that he asked the former treasurer of this previous government, that we were looking for the checks and balances of this previous government. There were cost overruns, and I will table the Hansard that basically the former administration blew off the cost factors around this whole program.

We took reins in 2007. We took the leadership, and we're seeing this through, and it's working today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, it's great that the minister can remember, because most times she forgets about everything she said when she was on this side of the House because now that she's a Cabinet minister she forgets all about that.

But I'm going to change over now to another minister, because I can't get any answers on this side.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bagnall: She doesn't know her department and I don't want to embarrass her any more, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Do you have a question, hon. member?

Deficit number

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, Madam Speaker.

Thank you. My question will be to the minister of finance. The final numbers in the PEI Auditor General show a significant growth in the deficit for 2008 and 2009

fiscal year despite large increases in federal transfers and tax revenues. The audited deficit comes in at 33.1 million as compared to 3.6 this year. Why did your deficit balloon from 33 to 33 million? Why?

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

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

I very much appreciate any questions having to do with the finances of this province. We make no apologies for the things that we've done here in the last three years in this province.

The hon. member is talking about a year in which the recession hit the world. We were very much in line with keeping that down, and have done some wondrous things. Our first two years here in control of the government finances came in balanced budgets. It's something for a new administration to come in, take a hold of all of the mistakes and errors of the previous administration, straighten them out, come in with two balanced budgets, and I make no apologies for what we did during the time of stimulus budget.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, and to the same minister.

Minister, you may remember when you came in you had a \$20 million surplus, not a deficit. The auditor reported that the revenues increased by \$73.9 million in 2008 and 2009 and that included an extra 39.6 million in federal transfers and \$19 million more in tax revenue. How can you run a deficit when you have all of this extra

money? How can you run a deficit when you've got an extra \$74 million?

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

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

To start listing off the things that we did during the fiscal year of 2008-2009 would take us most of the afternoon, but during a time when the rest of the globe was starting to shut down, it was very important that we put the stimulus in place.

We were the first jurisdiction to come forward in our country, and nearly right across this globe, to realize that we needed to put a capital infusion into our economy to make sure that we came through this downturn in finances which was going to strike the globe. We did this a good six months before anyone else was on this bandwagon.

Did it cost us a little bit of money to do that? There's no question. But what it did for us was allow Prince Edward Island, as a jurisdiction, not to fall into an actual recession. That means that we did not have two consecutive quarters that we had a decline in our GDP. We're the only jurisdiction in Canada that can speak of that, and we're very proud of what we did.

By investing heavily in our capital, making sure that we put people to work, and making sure that we were fixing the broken infrastructure that the previous administration left (Indistinct) -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sheridan: - we were ahead of the curve.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't think 100 million is a little bit, and obviously the minister doesn't realize the value of money.

Minister, the Auditor General said that you spent over \$100 million more that year. Minister, don't you know how to control your spending?

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

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir needs to do is a little bit of (Indistinct), and what \$100 million means in a budget of \$1.5 billion. We're talking about a 1% change. So what we have to take a look at is exactly what that means. Those are the type of revenue growths that we get each and every financial year. That's what you have to understand. Expenditures cannot outpace the growth of your income, and that's what all governments must strive to do.

In two of those three years we have done that, making sure that our expenditures under paced what we were taking in as revenues. I will make no apologies, as I stated here in the House. We needed to invest in this last fiscal year, and we were out there in front of the curve. We kept Prince Edward Island out of any type of recessionary pressures and I'm proud to say that we led the nation, in the past two years, in both per capita housing starts and new car sales, and that's because we had this economy still cooking along.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

With \$100 million he shuts down \$100 million hog industry in the province, too. He shows where he's spending and where he's - I mean, give everybody money, but cut out the farmers.

The Auditor General stated that the net debt increased by 4.6% while the GDP grew only 3.9. The Auditor General said this trend was worrisome and the rising interest rates would lead to less money being available to spend in programs. What does this minister plan to do to address the Auditor General's concerns?

Premier Ghiz: Good question.

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

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

I'm glad to hear the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir finally saying some kind words about our Auditor General. This gentleman knows what he's talking about and we have to look exactly at what he's saying.

When we have our net debt growing at a greater rate than the GDP, it's not what we want to have for the future of this province, but what we needed to do was indeed increase our net debt during a time when stimulus was needed. Again, we make no apologies for doing that, because we were the jurisdiction that first stepped out on this limb, and we are the jurisdiction that did not fall into recessionary pressures.

No question, we will be making inroads on bringing our net debt down. I'm the first one to say fully and clearly that that will be taking place, and you'll see very soon, within our budgetary process. We will show how we are going to reach that balanced budget as we promised last fall, and we'll show how we'll get to zero, and we'll show how net debt will continue to fall (Indistinct).

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm glad the provincial treasurer said that the Auditor General knows, because we know he doesn't. The Auditor General speaks of vulnerability of this province and their finances. He says it's showing a trend where we're being more reliant on revenues coming from the federal government. In fact, our dependency on the federal government has increased under your government where it was decreasing before 2007.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: It has increased drastically under your - minister, I know you will be negotiating in the media. You'll be going after by complaining about the federal minister - he's not giving us enough money - but minister, I want to know -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - what you are doing? What plan do you have in place to bring this in order?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and

Municipal Affairs.

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

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir makes a very good point about the federal transfers. In a personal letter from Mr. Flaherty to myself that he hand-delivered to us when we were in Whitehorse on December the 17th, he says that because of our great handling of our economy, and how we were out in front of this curve, that he feels that he can cut our equalization by the \$10 million that he puts in on the second page of this letter, and says to us: Because the provincial amount reflecting change in the ability of the provinces to raise revenues and offset any of the hurt.

He realizes that we're going in the right direction, therefore, he thought it was okay to cut Prince Edward Island by \$10 million in this fiscal year with regard to our equalization.

This is not something that we're negotiating in the public eye. This is just facts from our hon. minister Flaherty to myself, and laid out very clearly at \$10 million. But, no problem with that - I want to say this very clearly - Mr. Flaherty is doing his job of trying to balance the books in Ottawa, and I have no problem with him doing this. We just have to tighten our belts tighter here on Prince Edward Island, put our collective shoulders to the wheel.

We'll bring forward the plan within a week's time and make sure that everyone sees that Prince Edward Island is in very good hands.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from

Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the same minister. Minister, the interest on our debt now is well over \$100 million. Minister, that money could be used for cancer drugs, it could be used for lung transplants, it could be used for all kinds of things. Minister, what are you doing in this province to reduce the interest of debt to the province? What are you doing so we can see that it's improved?

Premier Ghiz: That's a very good question.

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

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

It is a very good question, because the last thing in the world we want to do is pass this debt on to our children, and continue to grow the debt so the interest bite continues to take a kick on Prince Edward Island.

But I'm very proud to stand here in the House today and tell this House that for the three consecutive years that we've been in we have reduced the interest bite on the provincial spending with regard to interest being charged to our debt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, it's very important to say that our interest bite has gone down each of these three years, and by investing very wisely in all our maturing debt that was passed on by the previous administration to us, we have been able to reinvest that at a lower rate.

At this time we have invested it in very long term bonds in debt and we are going to be in very good shape going out into the future

because of the foresight of this government.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, Madam Speaker. That's what I was kind of getting to.

To the same minister. Yes, you did, you took that debt and you re-financed it out over 25 and 30 years. You're going to put the debt burden on this province for 25 or 30 years to pay for the interest of your misspending, and I find that really hard to stomach that you're going to be doing that. You turn around and you put everything on long-term and low interest so you can bring it down now, but spread it over 30 years. So you're going to spend \$100 million over 30 years to try to pay off our debt.

Money raised from fee increases

Minister, last year you didn't want to raise taxes so you raised fees on every single department in this government. Can you tell us how much extra money you raised from fees on the tax grab that you did last year?

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

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

Just because of the foresight on behalf of the department of finance, we are going to cut that debt payment down. When you talk about spreading it out over a number of years, it's so that you can make very wise decisions on where that debt lies and how you're going to pay it off in a very concerted and very directed way. That's what any good finance department would do and that's what my officials have been working very diligently upon for the people of Prince

Edward Island, and it's very much in control.

Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: He never addressed the question, but anyway, I'll ask him again.

How many dollars in extra money, revenue, came into the province from your raised fees last year that you put in, that tax grab you put in of raising all the fees across government? How many extra dollars did you receive?

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

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

When the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir talks about raising taxes he knows what that is all about, because that's what his government was all about. But this government on this side of the House is all about saving Islanders taxes.

As you remember, we cut gas tax by 4.4 cents per litre. We have saved Islanders almost \$30 million since June 2007 with regards to gas tax. We have saved on the backs of Islanders in the form of personal income taxes almost \$28 million in the changes that we have in personal income tax. With our freeze on property taxes, we're looking at just going over the \$6 million mark. It is incredible what this government has done with regard to tax savings for Prince Edward Islanders and I can only stand on our record.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from

Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, he collected \$17 million in fees last year from the backs of the working people.

He didn't want to - through coming in the back door and raising fees so he can say he didn't raise any taxes, he got \$17 million, yet he's still not going to balance the budget.

Minister, what fees do we expect to see this year in your budget? It means that you raised them all last year. Are you going to raise them all again this year to help you out?

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

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

When the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir states a number like \$17 million in fees he should make sure that he has his figures right. When you look at fees, you have to decide what are fees, what are taxes, and what he's speaking about. Compare apples to apples and compare what the fees were the year before to what the fees were last year.

When we looked at all of these structures for Prince Edward Island last year, and reviewed to make sure that all were up to date, to make sure we were in some type of regional average, we made adjustments on some of those. Again, they're all in a very fair range to make sure that Islanders pay fees in the same range as their cousins and their neighbours next door.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Coroner services in West Prince (further)

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General.

Last week in response to my question about coroner services in western Prince Edward Island you said that your department was reviewing the *Coroners Act*. Are you at liberty to provide the House with more details on what service model might be adopted in future?

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

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

At this time I'd like to acknowledge the work of our chief coroner, Dr. Charlie Trainor. Dr. Trainor is working very closely with the staff at the Office of the Attorney General. Right now the coroner services, the provincial services, provide to the needs of Islanders all across this province. We are working at looking at the function and responsibilities of different health care professionals in the delivery of coroner services.

In the *Coroners Act* - and it will continue to be that way - coroners are required to have a medical degree, but in other jurisdictions such as Nova Scotia they have medical investigators such as nurses, paramedics, that do play support roles in the service provided by coroners.

So our office is looking into ways that we can support the services in communities all across Prince Edward Island, and we look forward to having more detail through those

discussions and evaluations of other jurisdictions and other health professionals as we move forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Supplementary to the same minister, Madam Speaker.

So you're saying that you will not be replacing doctors with nurses, or are you considering nurses as a possibility on Prince Edward Island to provide those coroner services?

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

Mr. D. Currie: The coroner service right now is a provincial service and with the work that's going on there's no intention to replace physicians with other health care professionals. The request is to look at other jurisdictions to support the coroners in this province, whether it be paramedics, first responders, nurses across the province.

There are some different models that are implemented in jurisdictions all across this country, but in the majority of jurisdictions coroners are medical professionals, physicians, and we will continue with that practice as we make any changes to the service here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Lobster commodity board

Mr. McGeoghegan: Thank you, Madam

Speaker.

If I could have your indulgence, there's a brief lead up to my question. My question today is for the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development. The fishing industry on PEI last year saw the lowest price for lobster since 1991. This spring, demand is high, inventories are gone, and no buyers have said anything about having problems with getting lines of credit, as they did last year. Yet the seafood processors on PEI have been trying to talk the price down despite demand.

Last evening the three lobster advisory boards on PEI had a meeting to discuss options to go forward right away. The most popular option was to proceed with an industry-driven commodity board for Island lobster through the *Natural Products Marketing Act*.

Mr. Minister, if the industry gets the support it needs from Island fishers, will you support this initiative to help the regulation pass so they can move to the next step?

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

Mr. LeClair: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yes, certainly what the hon. member has said about pricing is a huge issue across the board and across Prince Edward Island as far as the lobster industry is concerned. We are supportive of fishers looking to better their lot, let's say, as far as pricing is concerned. The option of forming a lobster commodity board is one option available to fishermen. It exists in the Department of Agriculture, the mechanisms for that right now, as far as legislation goes.

I'm sure Minister Webster's staff would be only too glad to help in initiating that or discussing it as well. I believe that Murray

Myles, who is quite capable in that area, is having a meeting Monday night with the fishers.

Thank you.

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

Mr. McGeoghegan: Supplementary question to the same minister.

How quickly could this process come together so fishermen can take back control of their industry?

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

Mr. LeClair: As far as a time frame, it would take a bit of time. The Department of Agriculture, and Murray Myles especially, could put more insight into this because there is a vote, there has to be a coming together of the fishermen and the association, and there has to be a vote taken and there is legislation on the forming of a commodity board.

So it will take some time but it's a way that the fishers can look forward to moving their industry forward.

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

Two-tier electric rate increase

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

My question today is for the minister of agriculture. Minister, you, as a minister, swore on oath to uphold, defend and protect the agricultural industry in this province. I'm just wondering: Two years ago, were you in their corner when Maritime Electric applied for change to the two-tier rate

increase?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, the hon. member from Georgetown has a very good question.

I believe that process started in 2004. It moved forward to actually reduce the discount for large volumes for large electric users on Prince Edward Island, which predominantly affected the farming community and people with residential electric heat in rural PEI.

The first piece of the discount was lost, I believe, about a year or so ago, and I'm not confirmed on that date. But the process, the application that came from Maritime Electric to IRAC was originally initiated in 2004. We weren't satisfied with that as a government and when we were made aware that that discount was going to be lost, we reacted as a government and said: We don't believe this is right at this time. We were able to convince Maritime Electric to withdraw their application to IRAC and continue that discount, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Question to the same minister.

Minister, did Maritime Electric ever submit a copy of what they were going to file to IRAC to you for your viewing to change those two-tier rates?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, no, Maritime Electric did not submit a notification to us and we were not aware of

that because it started back in 2004.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I find it hard to believe that Maritime Electric, the sole distributor of electricity in this province, would not have made an application (Indistinct) to the minister prior to filing that report.

You indicated that they didn't ever show you a report?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I was not aware of any report, notification of that, from Maritime Electric.

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

Mr. M. Currie: So I guess then, Madam Speaker, it's fair to say that you never did make any noise or any letters to Maritime Electric about this because you never saw it.

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, when I was made aware of the possible loss of that discount it was a Friday at approximately noontime.

I immediately called my office to track this story down to make sure - get the real story on this particular issue. That night I did speak with the Premier as well. The Premier's fundraiser was on. I made the Premier aware and the chief of staff people aware of it. We further investigated it on Monday morning and had a reaction from government on Tuesday.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Question to the same minister.

Minister, are you aware of the Murphy report that did recommend these changes to the two-tier residential rate?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, no, I am not aware of the Murphy report.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, it's kind of a sad day here today because on December 4th, 2008 that very minister did see the application from IRAC and he did write to IRAC indicating why those changes were not taking place.

Now will you stand up today and tell Islanders why you misled Islanders - you misled the media - on that?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of the Murphy report that the hon. member's referring to.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, the minister did make reference to the Murphy report, and on December 4th or November 14th he did indicate that these changes should take place, and you're asking why they weren't implemented in Maritime Electric's application form.

You did do that. It's under your penmanship.

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

Mr. M. Currie: You misled Islanders, minister.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I would have to refresh my memory with the documents.

I'm not aware that that actually happened, but I will investigate that and report back to the House.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Maybe the minister would remember the fact that Maritime Electric wrote back to you and indicated that those changes are taking place. Do you remember receiving that letter from Maritime Electric on December 4th, 2008?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I'm not aware that the two-tier system was in that document.

Again, I'll have to refresh my memory on that particular issue.

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

Mr. M. Currie: The minister's digging himself deeper, Madam Speaker.

In February of 2009 this government indicated that they wanted to recommend the Murphy report which - the Murphy report calls for the elimination of the two-tier residential rate system. That minister

over there knew about it. He misled the agricultural community. You misled the people. You misled the media. I would like for you to stand up and apologize today.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'll stand up and apologize because, bottom line, is what happened here, back in 2004, there was legislation brought towards this Legislature that initiated the process to eliminate the two-tier phase.

What happens is when you get over I think it's the 2000 megawatt usage the price gets cheaper. Now in every other province in Canada, or in a lot of other jurisdictions, there is a special rate for agriculture. Unfortunately, no one realized that agriculture was involved in this industrial rate. They thought that agriculture was involved in the other rate. All this was initiated under the previous government.

As soon as this minister, on a Friday afternoon, found out that agriculture was included in this rate, we made sure that was put on hold until we're either able to come in with a new power deal or that we're able to introduce new legislation in this House to make sure that the agriculture sector's protected.

It was under the leadership of that minister that initiated the process and did not have a separate system for the agricultural sector. It's our government that's correcting the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, it's

unfortunate what has happened here in regards to the minister because I believe that he has misled the agricultural community.

You express shock and you were puzzled to the media that this was taking place. Yet, under your penmanship, you asked for it to happen. It's unfortunate that he did that. So I ask the minister to apologize today to the farming community and all Islanders.

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I was not aware that agriculture was affected by the documents that were moving around.

As a result, on Friday, when I found out, when I was advised that there could be an issue, I further investigated, did due process, and we resolved the issue by Tuesday, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Update on Government Commitment to the Acadian and Francophone Community

Premier Ghiz: Great. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

As a result of a complaint by the hon. Opposition House Leader, my statement will be half in English, half in French. In fact, I'll let him know in advance, there's actually a little more English than French.

Speaker: Merci beaucoup.

Premier Ghiz: Madame la présidente.

Il me fait plaisir de prendre la parole

aujourd'hui, à titre de ministre responsable des Affaires acadiennes et francophones, pour mettre à jour l'Assemblée sur l'engagement du gouvernement envers la communauté acadienne et francophone.

Madam Speaker, as minister responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs, it is indeed a pleasure for me to rise in the House today and provide an update on government's commitment to the Acadian and Francophone community.

Notre gouvernement s'est engagé à maintenir un dialogue direct et constructif avec la communauté; de faire cheminer la Loi sur les services en français, et de contribuer au développement à long terme de la communauté. Madame la présidente, notre gouvernement est passé à l'action dans tous ces domaines.

Our government committed to maintaining a direct and constructive dialogue with the community; to further develop the *French Language Services Act*; and to contribute to the long-term development of the community. Madam Speaker, our government has taken action in all of these areas.

We've filled vacant positions within the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Division, and within the Acadian Communities Advisory Committee. In fact, as part of my new role in this file, I had the opportunity to participate in the Committee's first meeting of the year last February. This is a group of dedicated and knowledgeable community members who provide government with invaluable input, and we thank them, and I thank them, for their contribution.

Nous avons doté des postes vacants au sein de la Division des affaires acadiennes et francophones et du Comité consultatif des communautés acadiennes. D'ailleurs dans le cadre de mon nouveau rôle dans ce dossier,

j'ai eu l'occasion de participer à la première réunion de l'année du comité en février dernier. Il s'agit d'un groupe de membres de la communauté dévoués et connaissant qui fournit au gouvernement de l'information de très grande valeur et nous les remercions et je les remercie pour leur contribution.

De plus, madame la présidente, notre gouvernement travail activement à renouvellement de la Loi sur les services en français. Nous reconnaissons le peu des progrès dans ce domaine au cours des dix dernières années, et nous allons donné un nouvel élan a la loi. Nous prévoyons également le dépôt du rapport du Groupe du travail conjoint sur le développement à long terme de la communauté acadienne et francophone pour cette automne.

Also, Madam Speaker, government is hard at work on furthering the *French Language Services Act*. We recognize the little advancement in this area over the last 10 years, and we'll be giving the act a second life. We're also expecting the final report of the joint working group on the long-term development of the Acadian and Francophone community in the fall.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Opening Day of Fishing

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As we all know, this is opening day of fishing. Opening day does not really begin this morning, it began last night with a lot of fishers planning on how they were going to

catch the big one today.

It was no different with the group I was with.

Mr. MacKinley: How many did you catch?

Mr. Brown: Not only did the group that I was with thought about the big one we're going to catch today, we all - and like a lot of other (Indistinct), get out early, try to solve a lot of the world's problems, and we were no different. The only problem is, next year I'd like to get some of the Hansard staff with me in order to record some of these ideas.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: Madam Speaker, I'll have to invoke the rule that one member cannot question another member's facts here.

I would have to say that I had a fish on the hook that was about four feet long. At least that's what I saw before it got away.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: There are three types of fishers: one that catches and eats the fish, one that catches and releases the fish, and one that just can't catch fish, Madam Speaker, and I'm that type of fisherman.

Although the goal is to catch the fish, there are other parts to fishing. It is about fishing, friendship and fun and fitness. I want to thank all the groups that help improve the Island watershed areas.

We have a number of watershed groups in Prince Edward Island that are working extremely hard in our estuaries and waterways to cut away the brushes and to dig holes in order for fish habitats to exist. So I want to take an opportunity to thank them. I can say - the observations I've made

today - they are doing an excellent job and all Islanders should thank them.

In closing, I want to encourage every Islander to take some time and go fishing. Remember, it's about fun, friendship and fishing.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Net Metering Program

Mr. MacKinley: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to announce today that a project to construct wind turbines at five Island community rinks has reached an important milestone.

The Net Metering Initiative was first announced in 2008. It will provide rink associations with the means to take responsibility for their own power production and to lower their environmental impact by reducing reliance on conventional power and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Wind Energy Institute of Canada is managing the project. So far, they have held information sessions to inform rink associations about the program. Many of those associations then submitted applications, and those applications were ranked by the project management team.

Over the coming weeks the project management team will approach the highest ranking rinks to determine if they have the financial ability to participate. Five will be chosen and construction of the wind turbines will begin over this summer.

The Net Metering Initiative project is

funded through the federal gas tax, the provincial trust fund for clean air and climate change, and by the rink associations who are approved for the projects.

The Net Metering Initiative is a great way to use alternate energy sources to provide power to community rinks. It speaks to this government's commitment to sustainable energy, and it also speaks to everyone's desire for a cleaner environment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Eastern School District Drama Festival

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I rise today to draw your attention to some of the tremendous learning opportunities offered to students above and beyond the standard provincial curriculum.

This week, hundreds of students displayed their talents on stage at the Homburg Theatre at the Confederation Centre of the Arts. You may have noticed the beautiful faces on the front page of the *Guardian* today.

The energy generated by the excitement and enthusiasm of our young people could keep the lights on at the centre for the rest of the week.

The Eastern School District Drama Festival started at Queen Charlotte Intermediate more than 20 years ago, with just a few schools from the city. It quickly captured the interest of the school board, schools from all over the province, and the Confederation Centre. There were 17 performances this week. Many proud parents and grandparents will be at the gala this evening to support their talented young children and the

enthusiastic teachers who made it possible for them to be there.

This festival is a stepping stone for many students who perform in the much larger musical productions at the senior high level. This evening *Fame- The Musical* will open at Bluefield High School. This is the story of talented teenagers in a performing arts school in New York who sing and dance their way through the issues of the 1980s. Imagine the amazing talent required to pull off this high energy performance. Organizers claim this is their most ambitious production to date. They guarantee it will make you want to put on your leg warmers and dance in the street.

Bringing a play or musical to the stage is an exciting team effort, a terrific learning opportunity, and a tremendous way to unleash talent and inspire confidence. Students explore the many facets of the performing arts: music, dance, acting, costumes and makeup, set design and construction, ticket sales, and publicity. They experience many benefits: self-expression, improved confidence, and a greater appreciation for arts and culture. This is learning, it is enrichment, it is engaging, it is an extension of the classroom.

This could not be possible without the incredible contribution of educational staff and volunteers all across our province, in our schools and in our communities.

I encourage Islanders to get out this week, enjoy some great entertainment, support the hard work and achievement of our youth, and celebrate the terrific, blossoming talent in our One Island Community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Sport PEI awards

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Last evening Sport PEI recognized excellence in amateur sport in Prince Edward Island at their annual awards banquet. These awards recognize athletes, officials, coaches, and administrators for their efforts, accomplishments and contributions.

Nominations for Sport PEI awards are submitted each year by provincial sport organizations, Sport PEI members and from the general public. To be nominated by your peers is a meaningful recognition of your skills, effort and talent and is a true sign of respect for the person you are and the dedication you demonstrate.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all the nominees for last night's Sport PEI awards. If I may have the indulgence of the House, I would like to read the list of the nominees and winners so all Islanders can share in their pride and also for the public record.

In the category of administrator of the year, the nominees were Tom Crowell, Mark Bowlan and Mary Ellen McInnis. The winner was Mark Bowlan. Official of the year, the nominees were Jeff MacRae, Robert St. Pierre, Rick MacKinnon. The winner, Jeff MacRae. Masters award nominees were Jen Nicholson, Michael Morris, Heather Ayles. Winner was Jen Nicholson. Coach of the year, the nominees were Lewis Page, Peter Bolo and Peter Gallant. The winner was Lewis Page.

Junior female athlete of the year, nominees, Paige Crowell, Veronica Keefe, Jillian Durant. The winner was Veronica Keefe.

Senior female athlete of the year, nominees were Katie Baker, Megan Bryanton, Susan Sobey. The winner, Katie Baker. The intercollegiate female athlete of the year, nominees were Ashley MacDonald, Tessa Roche, Sarah MacAuley. Winner, Ashley MacDonald.

Junior male athlete of the year, nominees were Brandon Gormley, Matthieu D'Amour and Matt MacLean. Winner, Matthieu D'Amour. Senior male athlete of the year, nominees were Jared Connaughton, Matthew Caseley, and Brett Gallant. Winner, Jared Connaughton. Intercollegiate male athlete of the year, nominees were Kurt McCormack, Nathan Snowie, Anthony Bernard. Winner, Kurt McCormack.

Finally, team of the year, the nominees were Brett Gallant curling rink, Canada Games soccer, Canada Games beach volleyball. The winner was Brett Gallant curling rink.

I think we all should give them a big round of applause (Indistinct) this Legislature, Madam Speaker -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: - to the nominees and to the winners.

Sport continues to be a vital and essential part of life in Prince Edward Island. I want to thank Sport PEI, our sport division within our Department of Health and Wellness, and all our NGOs who do such tremendous work with our young athletes. Congratulations on a wonderful event last night, and congratulations again to all the winners and to the nominees.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

Mr. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a petition signed by residents of District 10 and others objecting to the move of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal jobs to Tignish and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Stratford-Kinlock, that the said documents be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have documents that I quoted during Question Period.

I would like to table, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, the work referenced in section three that I referenced in Question Period; the press release from the former government and the former premier in January 10th, 2006; the Hansard of December 12th, 2006, between my hon. colleague and the former minister of treasury; a policy of contract service, conditional grants and funding agreements, section B, section 2, of procurement, and for contracts, which refers to the urgency clause that I stated in Question Period.

Madam Speaker, since Question Period the contracts have come, and I will table for the Legislature and for the public of Prince Edward Island all contracts that are cited in the first tabled document for public disclosure.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I beg leave to table a report of the committee and I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable government opposition leader, that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, in the report, basically it's an ongoing report.

We've started, and we're still in process, and we will have to continue. We haven't finished the Auditor General's report yet, but we're moving forward, so this is just an interim report.

Speaker: Thank you.

Introduction of Government Bills

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

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled the *Labour Mobility Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Labour Mobility Act*, Bill No. 38, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, a brief explanation.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This legislation will fulfill Prince Edward Island's commitment to the Agreement on Internal Trade, Chapter 7, for labour mobility, which will provide Canadian workers the opportunity of having their certification and license obtained in our province or (Indistinct) and recognized as qualified to practice that occupation in all other Canadian jurisdictions that are party to the AIT.

The introduction of this legislation will create a more efficient labour market, and will greatly improve opportunities for both workers and for employers to enable them to recruit qualified workers from other jurisdictions when necessary.

This legislation also recognizes the role of regulatory authorities of Prince Edward Island to maintain the necessary processes and the right to set occupational standards that will continue to ensure protection of the public and the safety of our citizens.

It represents a major achievement in strengthening federal-provincial-territorial relations and the economic union.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a

bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable 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 Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Act*, Bill No. 39, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, a brief explanation.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The existing act is very old. It was introduced in 1988 and amended in 1995, and some of its content is outdated. The intent of the amendment is twofold.

One, it would be to update definitions used by amending existing ones and adding new ones that reflect key components of the apprenticeship system including certification, training and trade qualifications.

Two, to elaborate on and to clarify roles, particularly of the manager, board and advisory committees, and to better define processes such as apprenticeship agreements, appeals and designation of trades.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act*, and

I move, seconded by the Honourable House Leader, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act*, Bill No. 40, read a first time.

Speaker: Minister, a brief explanation.

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

This bill will make a number of amendments to the existing bill with regards to Victoria Park. As you know there have been many attempts at trying to rectify this bill, and after many meetings and consultations with the members of the city and those that have great interest in the park, and the council, of course, I think we've come to an arrangement that everyone is very pleased with.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motions Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Opposition calls Motion No. 52.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 52.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir moves, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the following motion:

WHEREAS the lobster fishing industry is

of critical importance to the Island economy;

AND WHEREAS Island lobster fishers rely on fair pricing in order to sustain their business and compete in the marketplace;

AND WHEREAS the lobster fishing industry in Prince Edward Island is facing a crisis in regards to low pricing;

AND WHEREAS the P.E.I. Fishermen's Association has proven that lobster sold to processors in other areas of the Atlantic region have yielded higher prices than what lobster sold to processors on P.E.I. have yielded;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly recognize the socio-economic importance of the lobster industry to Prince Edward Island;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly encourage government to immediately enact legislation that would ensure licensed Island buyers are required to pay the same price for Island lobster as other licensed buyers in the region.

Speaker: Hon. members, we'll now go to the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir to open debate on the motion.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's my privilege to stand today and bring forward an opposition motion to support the hardworking lobster fishermen in Prince Edward Island. The lobster industry on PEI is extremely important to our economy. In a nutshell, the province's lobster industry accounts for 65% of the total landed value of the fishery. The landed value of lobster is more than 100 million annually. With processing and other spinoffs, it contributes

more than 250 million in the provincial economy.

The industry provides 6,500 jobs. Yet, despite the sufficient contribution to the overall well-being of Prince Edward Island, the industry continues to struggle and it continues to seek government's support to help in getting a fair catch for their product.

Lobster fishermen depend on fair prices in order to sustain their businesses from year to year. Last season we saw in the Atlantic Provinces being paid more money for their lobster than what they were being paid here on Prince Edward Island. In some cases up to \$1.50, some cases \$1.25 a pound. These invoices were brought in to our Public Accounts Committee and showed to us, where fishermen sailed across and sold them in Nova Scotia and received a lot more money than they did here on Prince Edward Island.

Last year was devastating to our fishermen. It was devastating in the fact that in the last two years they lost 40% of the value of their fishing fleet, of their catches. They lost 40%, and Prince Edward Island lost 40% of revenues that come in because of the sale of lobster.

We realize last year catches were up for fishermen in a lot of areas. Not all areas, but in a lot of areas the catch went up last year. The fishermen tell me with the low price that they still did not have as much money as they did the year before. This was part of a trend for the last couple of years where we've seen prices of lobster fall off. It's devastating to our fishermen to go out and fish for two months and the only thing they can survive on after is their unemployment insurance. They have to live on that because they're not making any money on the lobster and they're having a hard time paying their bills.

Yet it appears government is not willing to do anything to help increase a fair price. Last year when we implemented the five-point plan for government to implement - we brought that forward - there was nothing in it for price unfairness, and maybe that was a mistake that we both made, that we should have had price unfairness as part of that five-point plan. But government didn't put that in, and I guess I should have added that because if I had, it probably would have got added. I don't know.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: The first day of the fishing - I can't understand why the minister of fisheries would be getting upset, I think he would be trying to do what he can to help the lobster fishermen, not make fun of them.

The first day of fishing season is quickly approaching. Island fishers are looking for action from the government and they are looking for some leadership on this vital issue of price fairness. Islanders deserve to know what action government will take this month to ensure that Island fishers receive a fair price for their catches. Or will government simply sit back and watch the world go by on this issue? Or will it go on, business as usual, as the quote from the Premier, when anything gets in hard trouble business will go on as usual. And it's the status quo.

The Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Gail Shea, deserves a lot of credit for her dedication and support for the lobster industry, particularly her 65 million investment to help fishers in the Atlantic lobster industry adapt to extraordinary market conditions created by global recession.

Meanwhile, there are several government members involved in the lobster industry on the government side of the House. Surely

the Premier would recognize the importance of these issues, yet his indifference is astounding and disappointing.

I doubt the Premier even knows which ones of his MLAs were fishers or what families were involved. I know the innovation minister was a fisherman. Last week in the House I asked him a frank question: Has he brought this issue to Cabinet? I wanted to know if he was showing some leadership on the issue to take a bill to Cabinet, asking for government to make sure that fishermen are paid a fair price for their lobster.

Unfortunately, his non-answer proved he wouldn't be accountable. He wouldn't stand up for fishers either.

I spoke with fishermen. We've seen reports in the media where they are talking about making a petition encouraging government to bring in legislation so they can get fair prices for the lobster season. I know for sure the Premier is aware of this. But I understand one of the MLAs brought this issue forward and the Premier turned his back on it. For the life of me I can't understand why the Premier turned down his own private members and why he went against the fishermen in this province. I cannot understand why the Premier did not support and then bring in a bill in to show fair pricing, the same prices that the processors were paying in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

By turning them down it is clear that the Premier does not understand the seriousness of this issue. Indeed, while the issues may be complex, the reality is clear. The important industry needs support and leadership from the government. Further concern is the fact that fishermen are talking that they may have to take their catches to the mainland this year if they can get the better price over there.

I sincerely hope that the Premier will not sit

around on his hands or his head buried in the sand and allow our fishermen - force our fishermen in to doing this. I wonder if the Premier even realizes how many people work in the processing industry in PEI and what this would do to this industry.

I recently asked the minister of fisheries here in the House if he would support the fishermen and bring in higher prices this season. All he would do was talk about the alleged, what he's done in the past. The past is not good enough here. We're looking for support for our fishermen moving forward. When given the opportunity here in this Legislature, he refused to explain what he is doing today to help the fishermen get a better price. He is intent on sitting back and doing nothing.

Together with my colleagues in opposition, we are talking with the PEIFA. There are fishermen who cannot do anything about the price. That is a fantastic group. They work hard. They're a great advocate for the fishermen across this province, but they don't buy lobster. They are a great lobby group that will probably be out there lobbying the processors and lobbying everybody, trying to get a better price. They will take this on their own.

As you know, last night they met. And they, on their own, came up with an idea of getting a marketing board put together for lobster and have Murray Myles have a look at this. It was the lobster fishermen that did this, not government.

The problem being is in their news release it's not going to happen for the spring season, they say. In their news release today - that it can't happen. So there's nothing going to be done to help them in this spring season for their lobster. That's the tough part about it. It's a great idea and I hope they can make it work and we can get it in place, because we need something in place

for the stability of the price of our lobster fishermen.

It's awful discouraging for our lobster fishermen in this province when they're getting \$3 and if they sail over to Pictou, like last year, they can get four and 4.50 for their lobster. That's discouraging. And sometimes by the same buyers that they're selling to.

So what we're asking for in this resolution, we're asking for government to not try to duck and hide on the issue. We're asking for government to move forward. We're asking for the Premier to be stand up and be accountable.

Premier Ghiz: Fix prices.

Mr. Bagnall: He can bring in a legislation.

Mr. M. Currie: You fix contracts with Aliant. You can fix this.

Mr. Bagnall: I mean, he's talking about fixed prices. We've never said anything about - all we've said was that we've asked the processor to pay the same price for PEI lobster as they're paying for Nova Scotia lobster.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: We're not telling them what to pay, Madam Speaker. We're telling them to be fair and pay the same prices to our fishermen. The Premier knows that but he hasn't got -

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) fishermen.

Mr. Bagnall: I can understand why the Premier would be getting a little touchy and hollering and roaring across the floor here. He's done nothing on this issue and he knows that he abandoned the fishermen on this side and he told them to go away, I

don't want to talk about it, that's not an interest to me. That's east to the Hillsborough bridge and west of Cornwall so I don't want anything to do with it. It's rural PEI. It's not the city. It's not urban. I don't want anything to do with it. There might be a fisherman in Charlottetown, but if it was, he forgot about that.

So I can understand why he gets a little touchy when we talk about the pricing, because he can do this. He can bring this forward. But he doesn't want to. He doesn't want to help the fishermen get a fair price this season.

I got to commend the PEI fisher's association because at least somebody is trying to do something to get a better price this year for their lobster. They've asked their MLAs to bring forward legislation. They were going to until they got slapped down, told not to do this.

I feel bad for the fishermen on the government side because they're told to be quiet, sit back and not do anything. We're not going to allow you to speak up. We're not going to allow you to come forward. Well, they can come forward. They can get up and speak to this resolution. They can get up and support this resolution and show that they are serious about the fishing industry in their districts.

I look around the room and I see so many members in here that have fishing ports in their districts, in O'Leary, Pisquid and Rustico, and the minister's own district. I'm surprised that he's leaving when this debate is on because I thought he'd want to be here. Even the minister of agriculture has fishermen in his district. I'd be surprised to see you get up here and support them.

So the solution we're putting forward is what the fishermen have asked. It's another initiative -

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) asked for this.

Mr. Bagnall: It's another initiative that's being brought forward by fishermen. They wanted this, Madam Speaker. They wanted this to come forward.

Premier Ghiz: I didn't have anyone from Tignish call me.

Mr. Bagnall: Obviously, Premier, you don't want to listen to anybody. You can't be taking your calls when you're down in Mississippi. I mean, you got to travel the States. You're not here to take your calls. What can you expect?

So anyway, Mr. Premier, I'm disappointed. I'm disappointed that you have a chance to show some fairness for pricing in this province for the fishermen and you won't do it. It can be done. We know it can be done. I urge the Premier and the government to show some leadership here. This can be done.

The marketing board is a great idea and it's a move forward if we can get into a marketing board because I understand that may be difficult to do now in today's market, set up a marketing board. If we can that's great, because I'm all in favour of that. If we can set up a marketing board and bring this forward.

I think if you look to our election platform when we were running in the last election, when I was minister, that was one of the election issues on my platform that we would do if we got elected. That hasn't happened because I didn't get elected, of course, at that time. So we never got a chance to act on it. But it was an issue that we were looking at. It was an issue that we knew, three years ago, was going to be coming down the tubes here.

But this government were of the attitude that

you could sit back and wait and see what happens and then we'll react. That's probably what's happened. Instead of being proactive, they react. They react to the problems after the fact and that's where they've gotten themselves in so much trouble on every issue across government. They're always reacting rather than being proactive. So it makes it a little difficult.

Our fishermen in this province - and I want to go back to the pricing again - they deserve so much to be able to get a fair price for their catch. By putting this before the government to bring in a bill like this, there's no guarantee that they will get a better price by doing that. There's no guarantee at all. The guarantee would be if the Nova Scotia fishermen were getting paid that price, then our processors would have to pay that price too. So there's a chance that this legislation wouldn't help, but there's a better chance it will because history shows that they've been getting a bit more money for their lobster than what we have. So that's an area where it could help.

The member from Pinette down in that district, he was talking in our committee. He was talking about this: prices weren't right, that we shouldn't be getting \$1 a pound more in Nova Scotia. We should be doing something to have our processors, when he was talking with Owen, to bring forward something so that we could bring the prices in line. I'm curious to see how he's going to respond to this because when he talked in committee he was supportive of trying to do something to bring the prices in line.

As a matter of fact, he was very adamant on that because he says that the processors in PEI are price fixing. He said that he had proof of it, that he had the documentation and proof to back it up, that the processors in PEI were price fixing here in the province. He said he would show that information because I asked him if he had it

and he said yes, he did. So what we're trying to do here is make sure that doesn't happen. The member says: There's definitely price fixing and I've got the proof to prove it, that there's price fixing here in this province.

I'm wondering why nothing has been done to deal with that issue because if I had proof of price fixing and I was making those allegations, I would be there and make sure that this were investigated. But I don't think nothing's been investigated or I haven't heard of it if it has. I'm surprised that the government is kind of not dealing with this issue.

Madam Speaker, I will get a chance to speak when I close this debate.

For now, I want to thank the members, and I'm sure that the members of this House will support the Island fishermen by supporting this resolution.

Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition to second the motion.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Today's motion is about lobster fishermen, the lobster industry and many families across Prince Edward Island, and also it's about one of our primary sector economic drivers across Prince Edward Island.

Once again, when we talk about industries or sectors we often forget the people that are employed. Whether that's a lady that works 12 working hour days in a fish plant and is probably making a little over \$9 an hour to the person that's out at 3:30, 4:00 in the morning, fishing their own herring and taking the herring off the nets.

This particular industry has gone through

many cycles of ups and downs. I know when my husband and I used to fish back in the early 1980s, at that time interest rates were around 26, 27%. It can certainly put an awful lot of stress on families. Again, we're back in the cycle where the prices are extremely low and there are other kinds of things that are impacting so it's a very serious motion.

It's my pleasure to speak to opposition's motion in support of securing a fair price for the lobster fishermen of Prince Edward Island. It's one of our valuable primary industries. The fisheries contribute to the foundation of our provincial economy, our rural community and our way of life.

When you think about communities like Naufrage, communities like Savage Harbour, like Tignish, the Wellington area, often the people in the community are the first people there if someone had a fire, they're the first people there if there's a tragedy or someone needs a benefit because of cancer, etc.

Often, when people hear about fishers, they have this picture in their mind that every lobster fishermen in Prince Edward Island makes three or \$400,000 a year and works for eight or nine weeks, which is not the case at all. It's one of those - almost like sometimes when you see someone that has a disability that's hidden. The fishery's been going through some really tough times and again, when you think of our fishers, on the south side especially, for years go out every day with low catches and low prices.

Again, it's critically important for government to be there in times of requirement, to be able to try and use some of the tools available to government that can help situations out. That's what this motion is about today, is looking at another option.

It's critically important for government to

recognize and respond to the changing trends in the marketplace. One major trend is today's consumers are more knowledgeable about the food they eat and how it's produced. For example, consumers are demanding affordable, wholesome, nutritious food that contributes to human health and well being. Food that's produced in such a way that it respects the environment and animal welfare. The marketing of high quality, value-added sea products to niche markets should provide a higher and more stable return to producers, which is vital to the long-term success.

When we think of the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning, it has worked in 2007, 2008 and 2009 bringing many newcomers to PEI and to Canada because of their Canadian dream. Often these folks have lots of experience and business connections from their home communities. It would be ideal if government held some, maybe, focus groups with some of these communities to come up with some ideas and solutions that also help with product development, etc., for the lobster industry so that one of the issues is we continue to sell our lobster probably in the same way that we have done for many years.

Again, when you think of whether it's someone from Japan, someone from China, the great business skills they have, the languages, etc., to be able to partner with our Island fishers and to come up with a new product and then perhaps brand it and sell it into some of the Asian markets in Toronto, New York, Boston, etc. It's an opportunity for everybody to work together to try and come up with some solutions to help out here.

I'm proud to say the previous government administration recognized the importance of developing new products, niche markets and new models of production, all of which can

help to provide fair returns to producers.

When I think about the PEI Food Technology Centre and the bioscience centre that's here in Prince Edward Island, it would be nice to know what types of dollars are tied to research to advance the lobster industry. I know at one time the PEI Food Technology Centre was working on the red pigment that's actually in the lobster shell that's a requirement for aquaculture. I'm not sure if people realize, but in Arctic char, in salmon, in the industry that moves fish all around the world, often they'll use additives that are not good for us and synthetic colours to make the pigment of the fish actually look bright pink or red. Well, in the lobster shell there are tremendous opportunities to use the ingredient astaxanthin. I'm mispronouncing it, but actually it's a natural pigment that can be used in aquaculture food products and feed for fish. What a tremendous opportunity that's there. Again, we're trying to advance bioscience in the province as well as helping our fishing and our primary sectors and our food. We would expect that these kinds of opportunities are being explored at the same time.

Historically, the province has been well known for producing high quality livestock crops in seafood. Today, the growing markets in technology advances in the areas of pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, function foods and vaccines provide an opportunity for PEI to build on its bioscience resources.

Again, many people, myself included, think we're at a paradigm shift right now. Cheap food policy was always based on the fact that we had cheap oil. Cheap food and cheap oil and globalization is going to come to an end and dramatically change and all of a sudden there's going to be opportunities for, especially, the Atlantic Canada area. But it requires leadership and it requires helping our primary sectors to be stable until the

marketplace creates these opportunities in the next two to three years. So again, an investment here is really required.

Primary resource industries need to remain key engines of growth for the Island economy. There needs to be sustained, meaningful support for our premium, value-added products from the land and the sea. Innovation and diversification are helping create new products and new markets, expanding more opportunities for Islanders.

This morning, I had the opportunity to listen to the radio and hear PEI's tourism campaign, and Lisa Gallant. I believe she's a new marketing person with the department of tourism, a very bright Acadian woman originally, I believe, from Wellington. She was talking about PEI's tourism plan 2010 and she was talking about the notion of how important food is and how important culinary tourism is, and using opportunities again around the fact that we have great local food and we have people like Michael Smith that are championing our tourism products.

What she talked about, though, is that PEI has a real advantage here that other places do not, but again stressed the notion and makes people think: How would we promote PEI if we didn't have our lobster fishermen? And if we didn't have people that go out and not only bring in a great quality product but think of how fresh that product is? Think of how natural that product is.

Years ago I remember talking to a gentleman that was from Dubai. At that particular time he was quite interested in our natural products here on PEI. Everything from what comes out of the sea but especially our lobster and mussels, etc. This motion's really about: How do we help the industry stay alive until some of these other areas start to kick in?

When you look at PEI's Tourism Plan 2010, it talks about the Culinary Alliance of Prince Edward Island. It talks about the development of an innovative food industry partnership from culinary experiences and promotional programs that serve as a catalyst to increase tourism visits, increase consumption of rural PEI products and increase (Indistinct) sales. We could have a tourist here for any reason, from any kind of a background, and all of a sudden that could actually help create a market or a product that's required in someplace else.

There's been a culinary alliance that's been working from the Department of Agriculture, tourism, the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, cultural affairs and labour, and ACOA. Also included were industry representatives from the PEI Seafood Processors Association, tourism operators, the PEI Potato Marketing Board, Culinary Institute of Canada.

When I think of potatoes and lobster, I remember a number of years ago talking to John Bragg, who was a very well-known entrepreneur and business owner, very successful in the blueberry industry. One time I was asking John what he saw as a real possibility for Prince Edward Island and he thought of the combination of lobster and potatoes. At the time, too, what many of us do not realize, that not as many people cook the way we used to and people actually assemble our food. One of the products that is wanted is a good for you food, and when you think of a double baked potato with a lobster next in that - John was suggesting to us: Why would we not take a look at that? When you think of PEI, we have the Food Technology Centre. There wouldn't be transportation issues in terms of using the raw products. Again, it could create tremendous opportunities as we're trying to help get the price of lobster up.

Government must work with Island fishers to strengthen, stabilize and diversify the province's fishing industry. Opposition values and supports our fisherpeople and the considerable effort and time and resource they invest in the industry. When I think of lobster fishing, I always think of a woman from out in Savage Harbour, a woman that's about 83 years young, her name is Anna Coffin, and she's still fishes every spring. She runs her boat, and Anna's one of those people who years ago, when she and her husband were fishing, went to draw unemployment insurance, and at that time was cut off and told that they couldn't do that because she was part of the family business.

Anna fought that, and fought that for all women, and that's one of the reasons why, in lobster families today, people can actually have their EI benefits. It's because of the great work that a woman like Anna Coffin has done.

But when you think of people from Anna to young couples like Jeff and Twila Palmer, that fish and they have three little babies - and you can look at any one of us in any of our communities and you take a look at the families and you can take a look at the stress that some of these families are going through. You can imagine if you have a business and at the end of May or June you have to pay the lending authority \$60,000 or \$80,000. That's an awful lot of stress on our young people.

Again, these are the people who are our neighbours, our family members, these are people that make up our communities. I know I've talked to a number of the MLAs on both sides of the House, and for those of us that really understand the primary sectors - this motion and both the lobster industry and the agriculture community really mean a lot to us.

Opposition values and supports our fisherpeople. Opposition will continue to work hard on their behalf, to ensure the interest of PEI fishers are recognized and addressed by government.

Today, we had Joe McKenna with us that was in the gallery. Joe is one of those great community people. The Premier recognized him for his singing ability. He often, in our church, is the person that's there to sing whether there's a wake or a funeral. One of the areas that Joe does is he actually buys fish from Tracadie. Joe represents one of the ordinary people that have their employment because of this industry.

The fishery statistics. The fishery is more important to Prince Edward Island than to any other Canadian province, accounting for more than 5.0% of our GDP. The total economic contribution is 350 million annually. It provides employment for up to 9,500 people, and that's unbelievable.

I remember a few years ago I saw some statistics from Prince County and Kings County, and just the number of people that are employed directly and indirectly because of the fishery in incredible. Fish processing accounts for about 20% of total manufacturing activity on PEI. The lobster industry currently employs approximately 50,000 people in Atlantic Canada. According to a 2002 study conducted by DFO, the total contribution of ocean industries to the provincial economy is more than 421 million annually.

When you think of the Native community on PEI and the opportunities that - through the Marshall Agreement - that's brought to here - and I know the Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter - Lennox Island is actually opening a new seafood processing plant, a lobster facility. Again, the connections to North America really, because many Native people have dual citizenship, both Canadian

and American. Many Aboriginal communities actually own casinos etc.

This is another great opportunity for PEI and one, again, if we can help stabilize or do something for the industry while it's going through tough times. Better times are around the corner, but if there is not short-term investment, or help right now, then you'll lose out on the long-term opportunities in the industries.

According to a 2002 study, conducted by DFO, the total contribution of ocean industries to the provincial economy is more than 421 million annually. I know this government's really interested in bioscience, and the knowledge economy sector. When you take a look at the work that's being done at the Atlantic Vet College and Dr. Cawthorn's work, Rick out there, it's incredible. These knowledge-based positions create positions across - for people to live and move here, and most of those average jobs will probably require people with a master's degree and probably range in the area of 55 to maybe \$80,000. So there's a lot of reasons why this motion is really important. I wouldn't say it's just about rural PEI, I actually see it as about the whole province, urban and rural.

The other part is you often used to hear the saying that our automobile dealerships, etc., do really well in the Charlottetown area and Summerside area if our primary producers had good seasons. The ocean sector accounts for approximately 11% of direct household income. It's estimated that the multiplier effect of the fishing and ocean industry is more than four times the industry, and makes a contribution to the provincial economy of up to 1.5 billion annually.

When each of us in here think about our communities, I often think of my community in May, in Morrell, and you go

take a look at who's shopping at our local bake shop, which is a small business owned by a local entrepreneur. If you take a look at who's in the Co-op, our Morrell Co-op is probably one of the best Co-op stores in PEI, and I'd probably put that in Atlantic Canada. In addition to that, the number of positions that are created and the number of local people, and local produce that comes in and out of our Co-op. Again, if you take a look at the whole community, it's thriving. Again, it has a lot to do with our primary sectors. Redhead Harbour and Savage Harbour are two ports that put a lot of money into the communities of Mount Stewart and Morrell.

Fish processing, harvesting and aquaculture account for approximately 60% of this number. Unfortunately, this government does not seem to appreciate this. For generations PEI's economy has been anchored by its primary industries of agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and tourism. Through hard work and innovation Prince Edward Island has established a solid reputation as a world-class producer of quality food products from the land and the sea.

Today's consumer wants greater certainty that the food they purchase and consume is harvested in an environmentally responsible fashion. A couple of weeks ago ADAPT PEI had a lady here by the name of Margaret, I believe her last name was Webb, she had written the book *Apples to Oysters: A Food Lover's Tour of Canadian Farms*, and talked again about the great opportunities of local foods and how the economies of PEI, Atlantic area, are turning around, and again have tremendous opportunity for a lot of growth.

She identifies, too, that communities in the Atlantic Canada area, if we truly invest in our primary sectors right now, and keep our local foods going, how it's going to multiply

in the future. Sustainable and prosperous primary industries are important for Prince Edward Island. Government must play a leadership role in helping our primary industries achieve continued success into the future, creating jobs and opportunities in rural communities across Prince Edward Island.

We talked a little while ago about innovation, and the combination of innovation and bioscience and innovative technologies. If you've ever had a chance to go through Ocean Choice seafood plant in Souris, you know the type of extraction technology that they are able to use, in terms of the food processing of the lobster product. If you've ever had the opportunity to take a person from Japan or China to that facility and how impressed they are with the quality, and how impressed they are with just how fresh the product is, and how clean the facility is. When you think about places, there are always more and more issues that are coming to the front because of food quality and because of different bacterias, etc. We're really lucky here in PEI because our facilities are small enough to ensure that they have no issues in those areas.

Government must play a leadership role in helping the Island lobster fishermen to secure fair prices. The fishers of the province are hard working. They deserve recognition for working long, often chilly hours for a top-notch product that's shipped all over the world.

Islanders may recall last fall in the Legislature when the hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park spoke about difficult times in the lobster fishery. His comments correctly identified the need for government to act, and I quote. He said: But the matter of the fact is we have lost the best lobster resource in the world. It's too bad this past year we've experienced the lowest prices in decades. At the same time our

lobster is the highest quality. It far outshines any other lobster. I continue with what he had said: There's one thing we cannot do as a government. We can't as a government sit idly by and let this continue to happen. We have to support our smaller industries, our smaller entrepreneurs and our smaller processors. They have to be given some assistance, given some support for research and development, for coming up with value added products, coming up with new markets. We have to find more markets.

That was directly from the hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park, and I'm sure he's watching us today.

Federal minister Shea deserves full credit for her commitment and her hard work on the issue. She says there are more opportunities awaiting through the ability to deliver live Atlantic Canadian lobster to the Chinese marketplace. There's an unfilled demand in China for specialty products, seafood gift packs, etc. China holds much potential for Canadian seafood products, including lobster.

I think I mentioned it in the House before, about a year ago I had the opportunity to take a couple from Taiwan out to my community, and we were eating at Jonsey's Restaurant & Bar. We had a drive down to Red Head harbour. We were talking about business opportunities, etc. The gentleman felt that one of the tremendous opportunities was probably taking lobster, buying it - if you were going to do something using Jonsey's restaurant in a different way - actually manufacturing a high-end seafood that could be done with your Asian recipes and sold into some Asian markets, which is a tremendous opportunity. We look forward to some of the work that the Department of Innovation and Advanced learning could be doing in these areas.

Clearly, more leg work needs to be done in

these markets. In an effort to get to the bottom of why lobster fishermen are receiving so little for what is considered a luxury food across the globe, key players from the industry were called before a legislative standing committee to try to better understand what's happening in the PEI fishery.

In 2006 fishermen were receiving \$5.50 for canners and \$6.40 for markets. A year later this fell to \$5.20 and 6.20. By 2008 prices again dropped to \$4.20 for canners and \$4.80 for markets. Last year prices for canners fell to between 2.75 and \$3.00 a pound, while markets were selling between \$3.00 and 3.50. Just last year alone the average fisherman in the Northumberland Strait caught about 12,000 pounds. I wish to provide an example of a fisher who caught around 9,000 pounds, which would equal at that time to about \$36,000. Out of the \$36,000 there's costs for bait, the hired person, the insurance, the licenses, the cost to gear up to go fishing, the maintenance on the boat, the paint, the oil. Add in a truck, storage, association fees, and that leaves about \$4,000 at the end of the season. Now, if you happen to be a young new fisher who may have paid on the south side around \$250,000, or if you were on the north side, and paid around \$550,000, your payment to the lending authority would be around \$60,000. So you can imagine the stress that's on these families.

Our fishery cannot operate on that kind of money. The loans on Prince Edward Island that the fishermen have for boats, for houses, vehicles, is based on a \$5.00 or \$6.00 lobster. They're not based on a 2.75 to a \$3.00 lobster. Fishers cannot survive this way. PEI will not be able to survive this way. Clearly the industry is in bad shape, but if we lose our processing the industry here is going to be in an even greater disarray than it is today. If we lose our processors we lose our industry, we lose a

lot of employment. We lose the whole works here. We can't afford to lose the processing industry here in the province.

I can remember myself, years ago, when I was in high school I worked at our local fish plant. When you're working side by side by some of these people that stand on their feet six days a week, for 10 and 12 hours a day, it's really hard work. It's an opportunity for families to put food on the table, to pay their shelter costs, to help with their kids' expenses, it's an industry that's really important to the province.

At the same time fishermen are noting the amounts of money that have been going into the processing sector recently, and for marketing. Fishermen are really looking to the provincial government for leadership, for support in a variety of ways. There is a low-interest loan program at 4%. Compare this, though, to the Quebec program where there's a no-interest loan program, and their insurance is subsidized. They have a variety of programs to support fishermen in the province that are not available here. The short-term needs of PEI lobster fishermen in particular are serious. The provincial government is obligated to look at a proper, well-managed approach to support fishermen through this hump.

It's a difficult situation. While the fishermen are optimistic prices may increase slightly this year, they likely won't go back to \$5.00 and \$6.00 mark, which fishermen really need to make a reasonable living. It's shameful that government has not invited fishermen to participate in seafood shows and other major industry initiatives. In fact, they usually find out after the fact that a number of the initiatives are taking place. This is unacceptable, and it speaks to the government's inability to see the big picture.

With the whole issue of sustainability that's so important worldwide, particularly in

terms of eco-labeling, the Island's fishers would be part and parcel of each and every marketing initiative. It makes common sense if they can explain to buyers and to consumers just how sustainable lobsters are harvested in the province, the type of pristine waters in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in which our fish originate, the activity they engage in, and how they do it. Government is missing out on a real marketing tool in terms of our own fishers. I know they are hopeful to be able to go to the European show in Brussels and to go to Boston and the ones that are coming up later in the year. I would hope that the fisheries department has decided to maybe include some fishers and invite them to attend these and other events as well.

I know this afternoon people were worried our bill, or our motion, may suggest to some that we're talking about price fixing, but actually, we're not. We have resources in the province, people like Godfrey Baldacchino, and Godfrey has recently published a book called *Remote Control: Governance Lessons for and from Small, Insular, and Remote Regions*. Prince Edward Island, because it is a province and has all the rights that go with any other province, has an opportunity to take a look at asymmetric federalism. I think that it gives an opportunity for the province to show some leadership.

One of the areas that asymmetrical federalism provides, it goes further since it permits one or more of the constituent units, such as a state or province within the federal system, to have or exercise more intensive powers than others relative to the central government. This is sometimes how Quebec is able to do special things for their province. I encourage the minister of fisheries to actually have some conversations with Mr. Baldacchino. He and the Institute of Island Studies have a lot of expertise and resources, and have studied

rural economies, small islands, etc. I'm sure that they would be able to help with some solutions of how you would word such a bill to ensure that it's actually going to work for the fishers, and perhaps then some of the other food products as well.

In closing, I would like to extend my gratitude to the fishers and their families for their hard work, their dedication to their livelihood in the face of difficulty. Their contributions to the overall economy are huge, not to mention their great contributions to our communities and our way of life. We wish them success in the coming season, and I promise to join my colleagues in opposition in holding government to account regarding the fisheries issues.

We look forward to unanimous support for the opposition's motion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion before I go to the mover to close debate?

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LeClair: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to thank the mover and the seconder of this motion. They have raised a very important and contentious issue for lobster fishers across the province. This is an issue which we as a government recognize and take very seriously. I am pleased to speak on this motion today.

Lobster is the leading fishery in this province, and for the past number of years some 20 million pounds of lobster have been landed at Island ports. The harvesting and

processing and marketing of lobster and lobster products employs thousands of Islanders. Lobster is a vital part of the fisheries and aquaculture industry that accounts for more than 9,000 jobs and an economic contribution of some \$350 million.

Because of global economic conditions, the prices received by fishers and processors has dropped significantly. Lobster is regarded by many as a premium seafood of choice, and is priced accordingly. When times are tough, people are less willing to pay the price they normally would. That has led to our lower prices. The result has been disastrous for fishers. Faced with rising costs and lower prices, many are experiencing financial difficulties. In uncertain times, they're not able to further invest in their operations. They are less confident about the future. Even in the best of times fishers start the season without knowing the price they will receive. In these difficult times that uncertainty is compounded by the fear of continued low prices.

In addition to the challenges of low prices, competition is increasing in the marketplace. There are growing demands that the fishery become certified as being sustainable. We need new products, new technologies and new management practices, to ensure that Prince Edward Island lobster is competitive and profitable. The provincial government recognizes the growing crisis in the industry and is providing leadership.

Over the past three years the provincial government has provided more support to this lobster industry than any previous government in the history of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LeClair: That demonstrates the support and confidence we have in the lobster

fishers of this province.

Let me briefly remind the members of this Legislature of what has been accomplished. In recognition of the immediate financial pressures facing fishers, the provincial government introduced the low-interest loan program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKinley: They couldn't do that over there.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. LeClair: This program is open to all fishers in the province. Under that program close to \$30 million has been provided. This will save fishers millions of dollars in interest over the five-year term of the program. In recognition of the need to rationalize the fishery in some areas, our government has supported industry led rationalization efforts. A loan of \$3 million was provided through the Prince County Fishermen's Association which enabled it to access federal funds in support of rationalization. As a result, 34 licenses have been retired in the lobster fishing area 25, and a reduction in the number of fishers chasing a limited number of lobster will be a significant benefit for those who remain in the fishery.

In LFA 26 the provincial government is actively supporting the development of a lobster sustainability plan. The plan will result in more effective management of the fishery in that area. In recognition of the need to attract a new generation of fishers, the provincial government introduced the Future Fisher Program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LeClair: This program provides a combination of training and financial

support to enable a new generation of fishers to succeed. Government also recognizes the concerns of fishers when it comes to buying and selling of lobster. That's why legislation has been changed with respect to buyers' licenses, to allow better access at the wharves. That is why legislation has been changed, to make it easier for interested fishers to peddle their product directly to consumers.

Last year, at the height of the lobster season, the provincial government intervened to take product off the market and hold it in storage until it could be processed. The crisis in the lobster fishery has resulted in both government and industry taking a longer term view. As I've stated earlier, we need to invest in new products and new technology. We need to invest in marketing and promotional activities that will help restore lobster as the premium seafood of choice. We need to address issues of eco-certification as well.

That is why, in cooperation with the federal government, with other provincial governments and with the industry, we have made significant investments in market development, in product development and in new technology development. We have participated in trade missions across Canada and into China. We have provided significant financial support to the Prince Edward Island Seafood Processors Association for the development of new products and technologies to keep our industry at the leading edge.

We are providing support to the new Lobster Council of Canada. That new organization has been given the mandate to work collaboratively with fishers and processors in the development of lobster marketing initiatives across the region.

At the same time, we've recognized the need to protect the health of the resource.

We've continued to work closely with the Lobster Science Centre at the Atlantic Veterinary College to learn more about the resource and how to manage and harvest it more effectively. The department's lobster monitoring program gives us a great deal of data and information on the state of the resource.

As a department, we have constantly and consistently brought the needs and concerns of the lobster industry to the federal government. We have helped to convince the Department of Fisheries and Oceans of the desperate circumstances facing the industry in 2009 and the need for a combination of both short and long-term measures to address them.

Unfortunately, the federal government failed to effectively deliver on the short-term measures program which offered a \$5,000 payment to eligible fishers. Only a couple of hundred fishermen benefitted from this program.

We have actively supported and encouraged the work of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association, and the Prince Edward Island Seafood Processors Association. These organizations are the effective voices of fishers and processors, and their ongoing input is vital to the future of the industry.

In the spirit of greater involvement and cooperation, the provincial government established the lobster industry round table which brings together all sectors of the industry. The round table is working hard to discuss and develop the long-term vision of the fishery and working on initiatives in a cooperative fashion.

There is, I believe, a growing recognition that all sectors of this industry and all levels of government have to work more closely together to ensure further success of the

lobster fishery in this province.

One of the issues discussed at the round table, not surprisingly, was the issue of price. Following discussions at the round table and in subsequent discussions between the fishermen's association and the seafood processors association, both have agreed in principle that a mechanism to establish shore price for lobster in this province would be a positive advancement for the industry.

All that raises the question: What kind of a mechanism would be applied to determine the pre-established shore price? There are numerous options and all of them have been looked at extensively. Establishing a price that is fair and transparent is a very difficult challenge. It is a difficulty that is recognized by both the fishermen and the seafood processors associations. The resolution before us puts forward one possible solution: enact new legislation.

I wish it were that easy. Establishing a price is a function of the marketplace and cannot be done by government alone. The mover and the seconder of this motion somehow believe that a magic wand can be waved and all would be well with the world. While I'm not prepared to dismiss out of hand a possible legislative solution, the proposal put forward in this resolution is one that needs a great deal more consideration. Legislation is one option, but there may be a more workable and effective solution.

In any case, extensive consultations with the industry are necessary before any action is taken. I would remind the hon. members that the question of establishing a pricing mechanism has been around for a long time. People have looked at establishing a marketing board, perhaps with single-desk selling.

During the term of the previous government

an extensive study of possible pricing mechanisms was undertaken. That study looked at marketing mechanisms in other jurisdictions. It looked at possible options for Prince Edward Island. Among these options were auction systems, online trading or Internet selling, collective bargaining, the establishing of a price review board and cooperative selling. Needless to say, the previous government took no action on the report. It was quickly and quietly buried away. The previous government chose to ignore the issue and that is why it remains unresolved.

I understand that the fishermen are now examining an option of a commodity board under the *Natural Products Marketing Act*. So we are now back to the question: What is an effective, fair and transparent pricing mechanism?

It is not to be found in this resolution. There are no quick fixes, no magic wands. The provincial government recognizes that both fishers and processors need and deserve a price that is fair and equitable for both, so that they can both be successful.

The fishermen's association and the seafood processors association have made a joint request to me as minister. They have asked that my department fund an in-depth examination of the pricing mechanisms available for possible implementation by Prince Edward Island lobster industry. That is a reasonable request, one that recognizes the complexity of the issue as it is related to pricing mechanisms.

Accordingly, Madam Speaker, I would like to introduce an amendment to this motion, seconded by the Minister of Tourism and Culture. That amendment would be as follows, to add the following clauses:

And whereas fishers and seafood processors at the PEI lobster industry round table have

raised the priority to examine a fair and equitable shore price mechanism that could benefit fishers and processors of Prince Edward Island;

And whereas a study was completed in 1999 to examine mechanisms that could be put in place, but the options presented in the review were largely not acted upon;

And whereas the PEI Fishermen's Association and the PEI Seafood Processors Association have called upon the provincial government to support another review of pricing mechanisms for possible implementation by the PEI lobster fishery.

And delete the final operative clause and replace it with the following:

And therefore be it further resolved that members of the Legislative Assembly encourage government to support a review of the lobster price setting mechanism and involve representatives of the PEI Fishermen's Association and the PEI Seafood Processors Association in its development.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. members, we have an amendment on the floor.

Anybody want to speak to the amendment?

An Hon. Member: Shouldn't that be seconded?

Speaker: We did have a seconder.

The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

It's my pleasure to stand up and support this very important amendment.

We know that even last night, I believe, the PEIFA or the fishermen in Prince Edward Island met to discuss more marketing together. So this is an opportunity for us to really pay attention to the fishers in this province.

I understand what the opposition is trying to do here. Unfortunately, I think they could be playing a little bit of politics with a very important issue. They know full well that coming in and ordering a price comparable to what's going on in other jurisdictions really can't be done, legally. Plus they know that we have co-ops in this province where there's 300 fishermen that belong - or how many fishermen? A couple of hundred fishermen belong to the co-op up in Tignish, and obviously, they pay as much as they can to their fishermen because the fishermen run it. In fact, they even got rid of their executive director, or the person who runs it, and now they even have a fisherman who's running it and doing a very good job.

So this is taking a responsible approach, and I want to congratulate the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development for bringing this forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Any other members like to speak on the amendment on the floor?

The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Mr. McGeoghegan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a great pleasure to rise today to speak to this amendment. The meeting in question last night that was talked about from the PEIFA, I was invited to that and was

questioned on a number of things. The topic of commodity boards did come up there, and they voted themselves to go forward on that idea, and I think that they're off to a great start.

It puzzles me to see some of the comments from the opposition talking about prices when fishermen in the eastern end of the province tried to take over the collapsed Polar Foods plant in Souris and they were denied the chance to even do that. So now they have all the answers.

Anyway, in regards to a private member's bill going forward, I've spoken many times to the Premier and he's been quite supportive of all the initiatives we've put forward in the fishery, and at no time was any private member's bill turned down, so I want to make that quite clear to the House. He's been quite supportive, as has been the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development. We have brought forward more things in the fishery than any government in history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGeoghegan: The hon. minister listed off some of the things we've done, so I won't do that again, but those were all issues that the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association have been working on for a number of years, and asked the previous government over the previous 10 years or so, and none of them were acted upon. In a short two and a half years all of them were acted upon under this government.

In regards to the amendment, and why that takes place, the previous motion is basically illegal to do. In some of my investigation on the *Natural Products Marketing Act* and the commodity board idea, there's an agreement on internal trade, and all provinces and territories and the federal government are

part of this agreement. To say that buyers here have to pay the same price as they do in Nova Scotia, that would be a great thing to have in place, but it is illegal to do because of this agreement on internal trade. It's a 217-page document which I have right here, and it just clearly makes it illegal to do.

So, in that, I think the fishermen's association is on the right track, and the commodity board idea has stopgaps in place that they can fine-tune to suit what they want, and they can set up the criteria and the dates and when negotiations take place and when arbitration takes place, and the whole thing is there. I think it's probably long due, but I also would question the former minister, when he was minister, why didn't he let the PEIFA know that this was available to them? Because they weren't aware of that.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. McGeoghegan: So that's a question that I would maybe like to have answered.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. McGeoghegan: With that, I would just like to support the hon. minister and his amendment, and also the PEIFA on their recent endeavours to try to gain back some control of their industry.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any others members who would like to speak to the amendment on the motion?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Yes, the amendment.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) speak

(Indistinct).

Speaker: Are you ready for the question on the amendment on the motion?

An Hon. Member: No. I have a question (Indistinct).

Speaker: Sorry. You wanted to speak to it?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, it's very interesting to see an amendment come in.

As I said in my remarks earlier, I commend the PEI fishermen to work at trying to set up a marketing strategy. It's good. But it's going to take a period of time to do that. It can't be done overnight, and it's going to be a while.

This changes where, in our resolution, we had asked for government to bring in a bill that would affect the pricing immediately for this lobster season for the fishermen, what I can see with this amendment is that government plans to stall with this, and put it off so that they don't have to deal with this issue this year.

That's the problem. We were looking for some short-term support that could help our fishermen this year. All it meant was that we could bring in - to make sure that our fishermen were going to get the same price as other provinces for the same product from the same buyers. It was very easy to do. We never talked anything about pricing. What we talked about is - we didn't want to fix a price, we didn't want to fix anything. What we asked for was to make sure that our Island fishermen would be paid the same price as other fishermen in other jurisdictions. For the same product.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I understand why they're touchy, because it's a touchy issue out there.

We make the laws in the province and we can do this. We can go in there and bring this through and make it happen. But what is done here is - now they're going back to have a round table. Well, I remember when I was minister, we had a round table -

Mr. MacKinley: We never had a round table.

Mr. Bagnall: We had a round table out there and we had fishermen in from all Atlantic Province appear on Prince Edward Island. It was talking about the crisis that was in the fisheries there.

You know, we still got the same problems and the round table didn't cure it. The round table talked about the issue and it will talk about the issue and they -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) the round table.

Mr. Bagnall: I didn't interrupt you when you were speaking.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bagnall: I can understand why the minister is getting upset because he knows that he could have done this. He knows, and so does the minister from Souris. It was his fishermen that called me to come down and say that they never see him, they don't understand what he was doing, and that they were looking for some help because they weren't getting it from the local guy.

So anyway, what I want to know about this one is, is that I'm disappointed because they're putting it off. What they're talking about here will not help our fishermen this lobster season, and that's the scary part of it.

Some of them will not get by this season if they don't get some help and don't get some proper pricing and they don't get some protection from the government. They're going to be gone.

I can't argue one thing about the amendments. The amendments are good. There is not a question. I'm talking about the amendments. The amendments are good and they are something that we have to do to move on, for the industry. No question. But the problem is it's not going to help the lobster fishermen this season. All this amendment was brought in for was to put a scare tactic in here to get the government by this bill without having to vote on the amendment the way it was. Because they wouldn't support the lobster fishermen and they wouldn't support the industry by bringing in the legislation. So they had to do an amendment in order to bring it forward.

The members are talking and - I've heard so many things from that member that aren't correct, so I don't believe that I'm going to listen to him now either. So anyway, the industry is here - the member that is talking there was a great advocate for the fishing industry. When he got into the House he lost his tongue. He hasn't said anything in the last two years. He hasn't done anything in the last two years for the fishing industry. He hasn't stood up. He's hid and ducked.

The fishermen are disappointed. They were expecting big things from the fishing members in this House to get up and support them on their industry. There is no question, the low-interest loan was good for the fishermen. I'm not going to argue that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: I'll never be one to argue against that. My five-point plan that I brought in was good for the fishermen. There was good issues in that plan. I'm glad

that Gail Shea believed in me and brought the funds out to make it happen because nobody was doing anything. Gail Shea has brought more money to this province for the fishing industry than we've ever gotten before.

We had four MPs here that were Liberal MPs when the Liberal government was in and they wouldn't do anything for our fisheries industry, nothing. They wouldn't work on it, they wouldn't do anything for us. We got a member who is the minister of fisheries now and she has done great. I have to admit that the minister of fisheries here in the province has worked with the federal minister, and I have to believe that they must have a good working relationship because she's brought all this money to the province.

On the five-point plan, nearly all the money came from the federal government, which is good, which is really good. But I'm not saying it's not - but it was excellent. I want to make a comment there too, on the \$5,000 that came - and you're right, there are some problems with that. There is no question, there are fishermen that needed it that didn't qualify. There was fishermen that were \$5 out that didn't qualify. Actually, our opposition wrote a letter to the minister asking her if she would look at that program again and -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: The new one hasn't come out yet, so we don't know yet. We'll be waiting to see what happens there.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) too.

Mr. Bagnall: We did send another letter to the fisheries minister asking her to have a look at that program and maybe make some changes on it so it would be more compatible with more fishermen across the

province, not just with a few that got it. It's a good program and we're looking at trying to do what we can for the fishermen and if we can approve that - I'm sure the minister is going to be lobbying on that too, but we have to work together to get this through for them and to work on it.

Mr. LeClair: Can you work on the fifth part of the plan?

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Mr. LeClair: Number five, can you work on that for EI changes?

Mr. Bagnall: You never know. All I can say is Minister Shea has done an awful lot for the fisheries industry and she will be working on - she will be doing whatever she can to help the industry, that's for sure.

We talked about marketing, and you know what? The marketing plan on this was really good and the minister made reference to it that they've made numerous trips all over the place trying to find - but the only thing is, what I was told - and I could be wrong, and I stand to be corrected sometimes - that no fishermen were included in these marketing (Indistinct) trips. I understand that even the PEIFA were only allowed to go on one of them. The PEIFA were only taken once.

So I think that we're looking at the fishermen, trying to help them, and yet we're bypassing them instead of trying to make them part of the process. I think that that has to change. Minister, you talked about our government in the past and that there was a report out that we didn't follow up on. When I was minister and we were in government we were getting 5 and \$6 a pound for lobster.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: I'm not saying that - the actual fact was that the lobster fishermen on the wharf got 5 and \$6 a pound.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: I'm not saying - I didn't say that. What I'm saying is when we were in government working with the industry they were getting 5 and \$6 a pound. Today, what is the price? The price is \$3 a pound.

I think a lot of that has been that this government sat back with the marketing strategies and did nothing on marketing strategies until after Gail Shea brought the money down last year. But the problem was there wasn't marketing done and there wasn't a lot of being worked on on new value-added products. What we're saying is that they're telling us that the lobster tails and stuff got to change because there has got to be a way that we can get more value out of our lobster than what the actual thing is.

Now that we sold FoodTrust - and FoodTrust is gone to just potatoes, and there is no marketing there for lobster and for the industry. So it makes it quite difficult to try and move on to work at areas where we can do this.

What I can't get over is - and I guess I'm a little disappointed that I expected it. I expected the opposition to come in with changes to the resolution. Because I knew the Premier was no way - he was going to get up and vote against our resolution and he couldn't stand to get up and vote against the resolution, so he had to bring in amendments that took away the chance for Island fishermen on Prince Edward Island this year to get the same price as our counterparts in other provinces. He took that away today by making this change to the amendment.

Premier Ghiz: I want them to get more.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess I'm not surprised that he would do that because in Question Period the other day he said that he wouldn't support the fishermen, he said that he wasn't going to support - and he actually said: No, I'm not going to do that. But if you want, you bring legislation forward and we'll debate it on the floor of the House. Well, we brought a motion in to have debated and what I'm hearing there from the minister there from Souris again, he's chirping across the floor but he hasn't stood up for his fishermen, and I'm surprised that he didn't. I can't believe that he has all these fishermen there that he hasn't got up and spoke to the resolution or the amendments.

Speaker: Hon. member, let's stick to the amendment.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. But you know, Madam Speaker, the reason this resolution came forward is because I was called down to visit with the fishermen in the Souris area. They called me down to come a couple of weeks ago on Monday and said: Somebody has to come and talk. We've talked to our members, they were going to bring in a bill for us. But what we were told is that they took the bill to the Premier and the Premier told them no way.

An Hon. Member: I heard that before.

Mr. Bagnall: So that's why the resolution had to come to the floor because the Premier wouldn't support the private members. So then I go down to them and they ask me if I would bring on a bill. I said: I can't bring on a bill with this amendment. So this is where it came from. But I did tell them that I would come to the floor with a resolution with their ploy. They asked me if I would do that because they weren't getting any support locally. So I said I would. That's why I'm on the floor of the Legislature here today, speaking to this amendment, because of the fishermen who've requested it.

Now, this amendment takes away the chance for any fishermen to get a fair price this season. What they're trying to do is put this off, and we'll have the same thing next year because they'll be putting it off another year because it's coming into an election year and they won't want to do anything.

Madam Speaker, although I'm disappointed that they've changed the meaning of our amendment and they've changed the whole (Indistinct) of it, I can't argue against any of the changes, because all of the changes are good for the fishery industry into the future. I'm just disappointed that they have to delete the clause where they could have put in some legislation to support our Island fishers. But they did not want to do that, they wanted to get away from voting for this and stand up and support it. What they tried to do is actually protect their fishermen with this amendment because they knew they'd have to stand up and be accountable and they wouldn't be allowed to vote for it if it was the other way. They were told they couldn't vote for it. So they had to make these amendments to make a change.

With that, I'll close my remarks, Madam Speaker. Disappointed that they brought in an amendment that will, and I mean will, affect what our Island fishermen get this year. They would not stand up and be accountable and support the Island fishermen. Now they're bringing in an amendment that puts it off so they don't have to deal with it now.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, speaking to the amendment.

Mr. MacKinley: It's interesting watching here how the former minister of fisheries is criticizing our government. When he was minister of fisheries, and before he was minister of fisheries, I remember being down in Souris when he seiners were in and

I was down there in a line with the fishermen. This gentlemen, when he came down? When the Mounties left and everybody else and the seiners all left with the fish, he shows up. You remember that. He was hiding -

Speaker: The amendment, hon. member, the amendment.

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, well that's what I'm talking to about fisheries, the amendment.

I'll just tell you, it calls for (Indistinct). So anyway, the gentleman took off, he waited until - actually he did phone me, I think, to find out if it was safe. So I told him he could come and he did. I got RCMP witnesses to that. Then he goes on about our government - what was it? - first thing I know they were going to bring in legislation that you couldn't sell green lobsters on PEI. You weren't going to be allowed to sell green lobsters on Prince Edward Island. That would have been devastating to our fisheries industry. Only for some fishermen getting a hold of Pat Binns at the time and trying to get some sense into him and some more people, that would have been a disaster to the Province of Prince Edward Island. But the reason they were doing that, they wanted to protect the processing plants, the one that they put all the money in to, the Polar Food, \$37 million.

So if you look at down through the years of the history of the lobster industry, our fishermen haven't been treated very fairly, if you look at it. This amendment is a tremendously good amendment. My opinion, just my own personal opinion, that maybe the government should be looking at setting up a fisheries board. Whether they could do that I'm not sure. But if they could set up a fisheries board - if they set up the board that they're talking about under the Natural Products Marketing Council, marketing board, the fishers would have to

agree to it, over 60% of the fishers could vote, plebiscite, agree to it, they got their board. Then they would themselves control the price in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

An Hon. Member: The legislation's there.

Mr. MacKinley: The legislation's already there, but I stand to be corrected whether it could take place or not. But we will know in a little while.

So when go to: further the Members of the Legislative Assembly encourage government to support or view the lobster price (Indistinct) involved in representing the fishing association (Indistinct) seafood processors, etc.

Going back to lobsters and prices, I was in India at a summit over there -

Mr. Brown: They invited you back.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, they invited me back. Yeah, I was in India. When I was in India, it's interesting. I met a gentlemen over there and -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Speaker: It's not Question Period, hon. members.

Mr. MacKinley: I was in India. When I was over there this gentleman came up to me and he wanted to know if he could buy PEI lobsters. He wanted to buy fresh lobsters, scallops, crab, shrimp, clams, etc., because he has a market in India. He's a retailer, wholesaler, exporter. So the first thing you do when somebody like that approaches you, you check to see if they got any money. Because if they can't pay the bills it's not much good to anybody. So anyway, we did check and it did come back that it is a legitimate company.

But he did tell me that when I was in India he tried to buy lobsters on PEI last year and nobody wanted to sell to him. They claimed they were all sold. Now that will have to wait. But he is flying in to Prince Edward Island here in a little while and we are going to meet with him with the minister of fisheries and that and we're going to see what can take place.

But until we get markets it's going to take more of our lobsters. We talk about prices here in Nova Scotia and PEI. Some days maybe they are. But what I can't figure out, if prices were lower in PEI, why are the fishermen coming from Nova Scotia two or three weeks ago? I bought market size lobsters for \$5 a pound, market size lobsters, and they had to come over from Nova Scotia (Indistinct).

So that tells you that's a bad state when they got to come that far. Those are a pound and a half pound, three-quarter lobsters, and they were good too, they were full. Yeah, they were. But I'm just telling you, this is - so we got to take a real good look at how the pricing is. If you go out to Calgary, Alberta where my son is, I was out there last summer and there was lobsters for \$8.99 a pound cooked, but then also there was lobsters down in some other store for \$18.99 a pound. We can't dictate to the store owners what they're going to charge. There is no way. Your marketing board could set the wholesale price or whatever you want, but still, we can't set the retail price.

This government has done more in three years - that's why we've got three fishermen elected to the Legislative Assembly, because the previous government wasn't listening, and he knows that. He was going to look at the major processors and eliminated most of them. The problem we have in the food industry today is three or four big chains control it.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

An Hon. Member: Yeah.

Mr. MacKinley: They control the price and then it goes down the chain and then you got the poor farmer at the bottom of it, or the poor fishermen, whatever. Their mark up, they don't have any control in the stores, but there are three or four. You can go to people that have been in the business for years when they had 15 and 20, 30, 40 different stores to sell to. They could keep the price up. We have got look, like, you call a conglomerate of large people in the food business. That's what we have got. When you look at the previous government, they were going right for that line. Eliminate the processing plants down east, eliminate the processing plant up west. Even in Gail Shea's own riding when she paved the road in to it, eliminated that fish processing plant.

Premier Ghiz: That's true.

Mr. MacKinley: Gone, yes, gone. When those fishermen come to the wharf and there are less buyers -

Mr. McGeoghegan: How many others did they shut down?

Mr. MacKinley: There are lots, we all know it.

But they had some deal cooked up with Ocean Choice that they'd be the sole supplier of lobster in PEI, the sole person. That's what they're happy about because - and I know why they did it. Because there's a lot there - their thinking at the time was they didn't create any jobs here, but by holding the jobs for the fish plant workers, by holding those jobs, they would help the economy. That's exactly what they did.

Now the member from Georgetown-Morell, whatever, those members know that a major

shake up going to come in order for our fishers to survive and also for our agriculture people to survive here in the province. It's not only here. As you talk to people from Manitoba, you talk to people from the US, the problem is: What is the answer? Everybody that's a primary producer - the fisher goes out and fish and is just picking up the lobsters of the day. He comes in. Sometimes it's a week before they even know what the shore price is.

So you take this here. We had the problem that this previous government would never allow buyers to come in. I went after them on that. Then they came up and made it so hard for a buyer to get a license it wasn't worthwhile getting a license. We changed all that. We made major changes.

When the former minister of fishery was there he was sticking up for the Polar Foods deal. He was one of the person's that was behind it. Then you had the minister of development, and about the only fishing he did was that big boat he had out in the harbour looking for the anchor. Tory dory.

Speaker: Hon. member, let's stick to the amendment.

Mr. MacKinley: We are on the amendment.

Members of the Legislative Assembly recognize the importance of the lobster industry to the Province of Prince Edward Island.

But, Madam Speaker, in order to do something in marketing - our minister of economic development back here, he's a fisher, our Member from Belfast-Murray River's a fisher, our Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park - are fishers. So they would know a little bit about fishing.

I was just explaining out to you that the previous government didn't have anybody in

there that knew anything about marketing of fish or anything about fishing. That's why we were fortunate enough, our leader, to attract three fishermen to run for us and get elected here to the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) put the zipper on it.

Mr. MacKinley: Look at that. He doesn't like to hear the truth. He likes to get up and go on and on but it when it comes back - because I remember all those times. I remember that. I remember phoning him at night, trying to convince him not to bring in this legislation to stop all the lobsters, the green lobster sales means fresh lobsters, not cooked, to leave the Province of Prince Edward Island. Green lobster when they come out.

Mr. Bagnall: Did he know what they were?

Mr. MacKinley: Well, after I explained it to him again and again. Maybe he got the legislation, I don't know. I think it was the premier, finally got to the premier and got some sense into Pat Binns at the time. Because that would have been devastating to our fishers.

Our fishers were ready to lynch people. I know the Member from Belfast-Murray River was on the phone to me about that. The fishers were wild right across the province. I was the lone member in here when they tried that, and they were all alone. The only way I could do was get the fishers to help to talk some sense, to bring some sanity back into the government of the day.

Ms. Bertram: You did that.

Mr. MacKinley: And I did that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKinley: What we have got to do, we have got to go and what we have to do is find more markets. We have lobsters. We have the best lobsters. When you look at the spring lobsters, the turnover is one of the highest in the world. If you go to Japan - no, Hong Kong or some of those places, or if you go to India, they have lobster tails there and they're something like \$67 a lobster tail, and that's about that long. I'd say a six-ounce, five-ounce lobster tail, \$67 Canadian. That's what they charge when they go.

What we have got to do is we've got to be able to feed those markets and that's where we're trying.

Madam Speaker, I'll call the house, I guess.

I'll be supporting the amendment.

Speaker: Hon. members, the hour has been called.

This House is in recess till 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Good evening everyone.

Some Hon. Members: Good evening, Madam Speaker.

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that the 10th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 10, *Statistics Act*, Bill No. 36, in Committee.

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

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Premier Ghiz: No. Just a second.

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that the 9th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 9, *Government Reorganization Act*, Bill No. 35, ordered for second reading.

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

Mr. Campbell: Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Clerk: First it should be read a second time. Move that the bill be read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government

House Leader, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Government Reorganization Act*, Bill No. 35, read a second time.

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

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I call on the hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (Greenan): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Government Reorganization Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: I would ask, Premier, if you would mind giving us just an overview here?

Premier Ghiz: Sure. This is with regards to the latest Cabinet shuffle. Basically, what it does is renames the government departments and then, in other sections of the bill, goes through different legislation where, for example, it would be - provincial treasury would be listed in another bill. It just renames the name to reflect the new name of the Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. M. Currie: Am I correct that you have 11 Cabinet ministers now?

Premier Ghiz: Myself plus 10, yes.

Mr. M. Currie: That would be 12.

Premier Ghiz: No, myself plus 10.

Mr. M. Currie: Three, four, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

Premier Ghiz: The previous government had nine and we had made the commitment of different departments for fisheries and agriculture. So we increased it by one.

There was also, as you would remember, a committee that met and suggested that there be a separate department of social services and seniors. So I separated those two departments and created the new department of community services and labour.

Mr. M. Currie: Could you go to page one, Premier, and just - maybe you got two lumped together here. At the top it's minister of agriculture.

Chair: Attorney General - sorry.

Premier Ghiz: It's the Attorney General's office, you're probably wondering.

Mr. M. Currie: Yes.

Premier Ghiz: It's still with education.

Chair: The minister is.

Premier Ghiz: So there's still one minister but it's two departments, as you know.

Mr. M. Currie: So under the minister of education and early childhood development, they should have it in brackets also Attorney General?

Premier Ghiz: It does. It's down at the bottom, Office of the Attorney General.

Mr. M. Currie: It's under the minister of transportation.

Premier Ghiz: No, it's just the order that they go in there when they list them all out. These are all different departments within the government now, is what it is.

Mr. M. Currie: So that makes 10 because that's in with education.

Premier Ghiz: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: It's 11, not 12.

Premier Ghiz: Exactly.

Mr. M. Currie: Anything else you'd like to add, Premier?

Premier Ghiz: I think we're good.

Mr. M. Currie: You're good?

Premier Ghiz: Unless you think I should add another department.

Mr. M. Currie: No, you're long-winded enough. We'll carry it as is.

Chair: Thank you.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Premier Ghiz: I move the title.

Chair: *Government Reorganization Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier Ghiz: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as

follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier Ghiz: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of a Whole House having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Government Reorganization Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier Ghiz: Slipped one through on you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford for recognition.

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

I'd like to introduce everyone to a great bunch of young people from the Christian Reformed Church. They get together every Thursday evening at the church. That's the church just up past Mount St. Mary's and they do different things each week, a lot of service work as well. But they decided they'd come and see how our province is run and government works so they're going to be with us here for 20 minutes or something like that. So I'd like you to welcome them to the Chamber.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville for recognition.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd also like to welcome the group from the church there, but I'd especially like to welcome my old district secretary, Kevin Barbour, who's now living in Summerside. I guess my loss is Summerside's gain. I'd like to welcome Kevin here tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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 Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, that the 10th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 10, *Statistics Act*, Bill No. 36, in Committee.

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 Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, 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.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Hon. members, the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford just asked me to give a little explanation before I left the chair to the members from the church who are here. At this point we're discussing a bill, and the Speaker leaves the chair and we

go into a Committee of the Whole House. It is chaired by a member of the Legislature, and at this point I selected the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood to come down and chair the Committee of the Whole House. Kind of a little informal way to discuss the business of the House. So that's why I'm leaving the chair.

Welcome tonight. Enjoy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair (Mitchell): I might also take a moment before I begin reading to welcome the young group from the church to the House this evening. Pleasure to have you here. Of course, the church is in my riding and I'm going to be sitting as the chair for a few moments here now. Welcome tonight.

The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *Statistics Act*.

We left off on page 4, carried to the end of section 11. Beginning section 12.

Mr. Sheridan: We did all of 12, we didn't carry it. We read it all.

Chair: For the young group that's in the gallery, when the Speaker leaves, the Sergeant-at-Arms takes the Mace in and places it down. So that's something that just occurred there.

Actually, correction on that. It's page 5, we're at the top of page 5. We had almost read all of section 12. So just one more line before I ask to carry:

Canada and for subsequent tabulation or publication based on that information.

(2) Except in respect of information described in subsection 10(4), no agreement made under this section applies to any reply

made to or information collected by the Bureau by the date that the agreement was made or is to have effect, whichever is the later date.

Section 12, Shall it carry?

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

Mr. M. Currie: Who will you have that agreement with, minister?

Mr. Sheridan: This will be an agreement with Stats Canada. This whole section is all about our agreement just with the order of Canada.

Mr. M. Currie: Do you have a draft agreement with them now?

Mr. Sheridan: There is a draft agreement done up already and every province, as I said to you before, is under this act already, they have a *Statistics Act* in every province but our jurisdiction. So it's just a carbon copy of the agreement that they have with every province.

Mr. M. Currie: Carried.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you.

Chair: 13. (1) The Minister may make arrangements with the department or agency with the Government of Prince Edward Island or of the Government of Canada or of the government of a province, or with a municipality, a corporation, or any other organization whether incorporated or not, for the collection of information by the Bureau jointly with them or on their behalf and for the sharing of that information with them and for subsequent tabulation or publication based on that information.

(2) An agreement under subsection (1) must provide that

(a) the respondent shall be informed that the information is being collected jointly on behalf of the Bureau and the other party to the agreement by a notice to that effect; and

(b) the agreement shall not apply in respect of any respondent who gives notice in writing to the Director that they object to sharing of information between the Bureau and the other party to the agreement.

(3) If a respondent objects to the sharing of information between the Bureau and any other party to an agreement under subsection (1), the Bureau shall not share the information in a form that would identify the respondent.

(4) The sharing of information pursuant to an agreement under subsection (1) may, subject to subsection (2), include replies to original inquiries and supplementary information provided by a respondent to the Bureau and the other party to the agreement.

(5) Subsections (1) to (4) do not apply to an agreement with Statistics Canada.

Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: No. (3), minister, could you just explain that a little further.

Mr. Sheridan: As it says there. If a respondent objects to the sharing of information the Bureau will not share that information in any format that would even identify who that respondent is. So when we talked about it the other night when we were on the floor speaking about this, it could come out in a list or a grouping of all that information.

So as I said the other night to the Member from Montague-Kilmuir, if it said that he

was one of 75 respondents in Montague that wore glasses, it could be in that fashion but it can't say that it is the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. M. Currie: Can people refuse to give you information?

Mr. Sheridan: A respondent can always refuse under this kind of format, and under this strong act. It is very strongly suggested that they comply. But a respondent, as you can well imagine, can always turn down the request. But in the case and in this very section, it talks to them about the fact that, if they have an issue with it, they have to clarify what will be released and make sure that they are comfortable exactly the details that will be released and that they are comfortable going forward with the (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Do you receive funding from Ottawa for those children that are home-schooled?

There are hundreds of kids in this province that are home-schooled, but under the funding arrangement do you receive - and there's CST or whatever it's called - you receive equalization for those children that are in our public school system. But I'm just wondering - and we don't have any privates to some degree, I don't think, but maybe we do. Yes, we do. Those that are home-schooled, they're not really your figures. There are hundreds.

Mr. Sheridan: There will probably be home-schooled, probably 125 kids or something like that during a school year. You're not suggesting that it talks about it anywhere here in this bill, or that's just a general question?

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

Mr. M. Currie: No, just because of the

numbers. You're using this to harmonize with the rest of the province, but you're also using it as a tool to get an accurate number of funding arrangements from Ottawa, right?

Mr. Sheridan: Definitely for our equalization.

Mr. M. Currie: Right, okay, so if there are kids that are being home-schooled they're not on your sheets and you don't get equalization for them. Am I correct?

Mr. Sheridan: No, equalization doesn't have anything to do with the number of children in the schools. Equalization is just based on the number of citizens on Prince Edward Island.

Mr. M. Currie: But there is another funding arrangement that you get for education, isn't there?

Mr. Sheridan: We get funding in a package of social transfer.

Mr. M. Currie: Is it CST?

Mr. Sheridan: The CST (Indistinct). It's not clearly defined for student enrollment. It covers off two things. Education is one of those parameters that is covered by the provincial jurisdiction, so we cover that cost off ourselves for that kind of format. The social transfer payment is more along the lines for other social needs, other than school. But this one, it certainly plays into the fact that we need to have accurate information. But that one wouldn't play in, as I spoke about the other night, with regard to equalization.

Mr. M. Currie: There are people on PEI that are not on the grid, they don't send their kids to our schools, they're being home-schooled - that's the way they want to live, but are they part of your formula (Indistinct) you don't know?

Mr. Sheridan: They don't need to be for our equalization or our social transfer.

Mr. M. Currie: So how are they counted in?

Mr. Sheridan: You mean with regard to census?

Mr. M. Currie: Is that how you do it? They're a number?

Mr. Sheridan: Yeah, for a census it's totally different, hon. member. When we're talking about family members, as you know, you know how a census is done, it counts all the individuals in a home, but it doesn't impact our social transfer number for the number of kids that are in the school.

We do have issues with regard to those that are in taking our school system that are not residents of PEI or are not Canadian citizens and that we look at that with a different fashion. We need the help from them to fund their own positions in our schools. But with regards to social transfers it wouldn't impact us.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

14. A person employed or otherwise engaged under this Act and sworn or affirmed under section 7, who seeks information from a respondent under this Act, must first give that persons's name and title of office to the respondent and advise the respondent

(a) of the purpose of the survey;

(b) if the request is one that the respondent must comply with under section 16, that the respondent must comply with the request within the time and in the form required by the Director;

(c) whether the information collected from the respondent will be or might be shared pursuant to an agreement under section 12 or 13; and

(d) if the information collected from the respondent will be or might be shared pursuant to an agreement under section 13, of the respondent's right to object to the sharing of the information.

Shall it carry? Carried.

15. Any document purporting to be signed by the Minister or the Director that refers to any appointment or removal of, or instructions to, any person employed or otherwise engaged in the administration of this Act is evidence

(a) of the appointment, removal or instructions; and

(b) that the document was signed and addressed as it purports to be.

Leader of the Opposition: Question.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: How many staff do you propose will be working under this area?

Mr. Sheridan: We have three staff members now that sit in our statistics -

Leader of the Opposition: Branch, okay.

Mr. Sheridan: - portion of finance will be there. If there comes a large project that we can't handle inside that portion, there will be contracted people that may do this work.,

As you saw, back under one of the portions of this bill where they have to swear the same oath, do the same confidentiality, and all of that type of thing, if there was a large

piece of work, probably after the next census, perhaps, where they'll be following along with census numbers, and then be able to fill out the post-census survey. That's the one that's so key, and I would expect that one of our senior people - one of those three - will be in charge of that project, and probably have one or two people hired to help with that post-census survey. But other than that, I think that our three will be able to handle it.

Leader of the Opposition: So it'll be just three plus casual.

Mr. Sheridan: Correct.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Sheridan: Excuse me. Mr. Nigel Burns has arrived. Could we bring him onto the floor?

Chair: Permission to bring Mr. Burns onto the floor.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Sheridan: My fault totally, not having Mr. Burns here on time. We were working on the budget all through supper hour, and I sent him home thinking that we weren't going to need to do the stats act tonight. So, my fault, Mr. Burns. My apologies, and my apologies to the House.

Chair: 16 (1) If the Director believes on reasonable grounds that a mandatory response from respondents to the Bureau in respect of a request for information under this Act is necessary to ensure the reliability of the statistics produced by the Bureau, the Director may declare that all respondents must comply with a request for information under this Act in a form and within such

time as the Director may require.

(2) A respondent is not required to reply to a request for information under this Act unless the Director has declared that all respondents must comply with the request.

Shall it carry? Carried.

17. If the Director has declared under section 16 that all respondents must comply with a request for information under this Act, a respondent who fails to comply with the request within the time and in the form required by the Director is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than \$1,000.

Shall it carry?

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, could you give me an example of that?

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

Mr. M. Currie: What did you mean by -

Mr. Sheridan: As we spoke about earlier this bill, for 99% of the time, will always be voluntary, and if there's a time when the director says we have to have this information -

Mr. M. Currie: From who?

Mr. Sheridan: That's what I'm just going to refer to Nigel on here now, is to talk about. I would expect it would census kind of stuff.

Nigel Burns Manager: The default of this act is for surveys to be voluntary. The default in other provinces, and under the federal act, is that they are mandatory surveys. The default in this case would be voluntary except in the case where the information is absolutely vital that we get

accurate and complete, concise information, that it would be made a mandatory survey where responses are required.

Mr. Sheridan: So the hon. member's asking for an example -

Mr. M. Currie: Would that be an individual?

Mr. Sheridan: - (Indistinct) census where we have to have it?

Nigel Burns Manager: It would be something of that seriousness.

Mr. M. Currie: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear that.

Mr. Sheridan: It would be like the census, where we need to know exactly that. We have to have those census numbers -

Mr. M. Currie: Carried.

Mr. Sheridan: - so the most important part is -

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

18. Every person employed or otherwise engaged under this Act who, after taking the oath or affirmation set out in section 7,

(a) wilfully makes any false declaration, statement or return in the performance of the person's duties;

(b) in the pretended performance of the person's duties, obtains or seeks to obtain information that the person is not authorized to obtain;

(c) violates subsection 10(2);

(d) wilfully discloses to any person not entitled to receive it under this Act, any information obtained in the course of

employment that might exert an influence upon or affect the market value of any stocks, bonds or other security, or any product or article; or

(e) uses any such information for the purpose of speculating in any stocks, bonds or other security, or any product or article, is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than \$10,000

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Mr. M. Currie: This refers, minister, to your employees, that they take your information (Indistinct) - carried.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you.

Mr. M. Currie: Number 19 and 20 are fine, too.

Chair: Carry sections 19 and 20? Carried.

Mr. Sheridan: I move the title.

Chair: *Statistics Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Sheridan: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor and the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Sheridan: Mr, Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to without amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Statistics Act*, I beg leave to report that the Committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

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

With you indulgence, and that of this House, I ask that we now revert to Government Motions.

Speaker: Okay.

Government Motions

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that Motion No. 27 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 27.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier moves, seconded by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the following motion:

WHEREAS the Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS) program provides financial compensation to farmers and landowners for the contributions they make to help protect the quality of Prince Edward

Island's soil, air and water resources and to enhance wildlife habitat;

AND WHEREAS Prince Edward Island is the first jurisdiction in Canada to offer the program on a province-wide basis;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government has allocated \$1 million a year over five years in support of the program;

AND WHEREAS the contributions made by farmers and landowners provide environmental benefits to all of society;

AND WHEREAS farmers and landowners have made significant investments in on-farm conservation projects that meet and exceed environmental standards;

AND WHEREAS the ALUS program supports and complements the efforts of watershed management groups;

AND WHEREAS Prince Edward Island farmers and landowners are leading the way in the adoption of environmentally responsible land use practices;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island go on record as commending the provincial government for the support it provides to farmers and landowners under the ALUS program for the adoption of sound stewardship practices;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly recognizes and commends farmers and landowners for their efforts to protect and enhance the quality of the environment.

Speaker: Thank you.

For those of you in the gallery this evening, the motion that we'll be discussing, that the Clerk has just read, the mover will open the

debate and the seconder will second the motion, and then anybody else in the House who would like to speak to the motion will speak. Then we'll call for the question, and we'll take a vote on it. So that's what's going to happen here on in.

So now I will give the floor to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier to open the debate on the motion.

Mr. M. Currie: And/or amend.

Speaker: Yes. Thank you.

Mr. Webster: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a great opportunity to speak to the House tonight with regards to the ALUS program that we now carry out. It's great to rise here tonight and speak with respect to the Alternative Land Use Services program.

This program builds on a strong partnership between industry, environmental groups and the Departments of Agriculture and Environment, Energy and Forestry. I would like to recognize the efforts of the industry and of various watershed and environmental groups for their input into the development of this program.

Prince Edward Island farmers have been leading the way in the adoption of sound stewardship programs. More than 1,000 farms, accounting for a major portion of agricultural land in this province, have completed environmental farm plans. Under the Canada-Prince Edward Island Agricultural Stewardship program, government and industry have invested more than \$20 million in on-farm conservation practices. Under the program they have undertaken soil conservation projects, established hedgerows, adopted integrated pest management and other practices to reduce the risk of pesticides. They have also constructed manure, fuel and

pesticide storage, adopted nutrient management plans, and they have also modified equipment to reduce runoff, and equipment that applies pesticides more effectively. They have lengthened crop rotations, fenced cattle out of streams, and established buffer zones. These and other beneficial management practices have gone a long way to help farms become more productive and sustainable. They have also helped producers comply with environmental legislation aimed at protecting the quality of our air, soil and water.

This new ALUS program both recognizes and rewards producers for the environmental benefits they produce to the rest of society. The program also recognizes efforts that go beyond what is required in legislation. As the largest user of land in the province, producers will continue to be good stewards of their resources.

This program follows on two pilot projects that have been carried out in the Souris and Trout River watersheds. These projects have enabled us to learn more about how farmers and their neighbours can work together to protect and enhance the environment. Aside from the environmental benefits, this program will also help the agricultural industry demonstrate its responsible production practices. Increasingly, consumers want to know where their food comes from and they want to be assured that it is produced in a responsible manner. The program will provide further assurance to the consumers that Prince Edward Island produces healthy food from a healthy environment.

Agriculture is the largest user of our natural resources in the province. These natural resources contribute many environmental benefits to the rest of society. That is why it is most fitting that society share in the investments that the agricultural industry is

making to protect and enhance the environment. That is what the ALUS program is all about.

The program complements as well the contributions of watershed groups. These groups have become actively involved in encouraging participation in the program. The Federation of Agriculture has also been actively promoting this program. This program is a real team effort by government, by industry and environmental organizations and by producers that ensure that ALUS succeeds in Prince Edward Island.

I am pleased to report today that more than 350 applications have been received. This year we are budgeting a total of \$500,000 of the \$1 million available each year. We are confident that over the life of the ALUS the budget will be fully subscribed. This program has enabled producers across Prince Edward Island to strengthen their stewardship practices. It has enabled them to enhance their contributions to the quality of our air, soil and water resources, and to ensure greater biodiversity.

Over the coming months we will be evaluating the program to determine what, if any, changes are needed for it to become more responsive to the needs of producers and more effective in protecting the environment. This is a highly successful program, and as stated in the resolution, deserves the full support of the Members of this Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I trust the support will be there for the legislation tonight.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-

Inverness to second the motion.

Do you require the podium, hon. member?

Mr. Henderson: No, thanks, Madam Speaker.

It does give me great pleasure to second this very worthy motion on the Alternate Land Use Services program. As a landowner myself, and a former - I don't want to say former farmer, I still farm a little bit, in the Lot 11 area, it gives me great pleasure to talk a little bit about this program and some of the good things that the ALUS program can do.

I'm going to summarize a little bit in the respect that the ALUS program in itself isn't the solution. I look at the ALUS program as a program that's the carrot to entice farmers to do more, and go on and beyond the call of duty as landowners to assist in contributing to a sound and prudent environment in our communities.

I've always had the opinion that land, every piece of property, is almost different, it almost has its own personality. I've always had this debate within caucus and within my constituency around this whole issue. Sometimes it's very hard to make a one size fits all law or recommendations for an individual doing a piece of property. You almost have to take each particular piece of property and look at its needs and its values and what we can do to ensure and mitigate any potential hazard that we might cause our neighbours or other occupations in the community that we live in.

I know in my own circumstance I probably have over a mile of shore frontage. I know when fencing cattle out of waterways I had to fence off a mile of shore frontage to make sure that my cattle didn't access streams. At one time my grandfather and great-grandfather, when they had a farm, it was a

water fencing and the cattle had access to everything. Times have changed, and so we went and we got some assistance through that particular program to fence our cattle out of waterways, and did that.

I always sort of felt - I don't think there's any farmer out there that has any intention to create any harm or provide any risks to our environment. Nobody intentionally plans on doing that, but unfortunately there are times when Mother Nature is never that cooperative, when we get large deluges of rain, certain circumstances are beyond, sometimes, farmers' control. So this is where I look at tying into the ALUS program that's a great benefit to farmers to maybe expand some of those risky areas where you can extend the buffer zone or put other mitigating factors in place that would prevent possible erosion or possible harm to our environment.

When the minister of agriculture talks about 1,100 farmers that participated in the Environmental Farm Plan, that's a very impressive number. I know myself, I also had participated in that program and put together a plan for all my properties. It sometimes goes without saying that everybody tries to do the right thing, but when you sit down and you go through the whole process and you identify where your risk areas are, that's where you start to have that sober second thought and that's where you try to put in those mitigating factors.

That's where ALUS can sometimes be the incentive to maybe do more than you normally would have done because there may be some incentive there. I believe the ALUS program for those sensitive areas contributes about \$75 an acre for a five-year contract to increase buffer zones or put in some of those -

An Hon. Member: Is that every year?

Mr. Henderson: And that's every year. Those are things - unfortunately, in today's agriculture it's not that easy to make \$75 an acre on a piece of property any more.

Mr. MacKinley: Unless you sell it.

Mr. Henderson: So from those perspectives, I think it's a good thing that we can provide those supports for that.

But other things I look at out there, certainly there are a number of partners. I know the minister alluded to that before. We do have a lot of partners involved in trying to improve our environment. I know in my own riding of O'Leary-Inverness we have the watershed groups. I've been a very strong advocate of the watershed groups because the watershed groups comprise individuals that represent our communities. They're our friends, our neighbours. There are farmers, there are business people.

When they collectively work towards improving our communities, water systems and environment, that not only puts a lot of pressure on farmers. If your neighbours are coming to you and they're identifying risky spots on your property, I think a farmer with the incentive of the ALUS program should take heed in that and try to eliminate or reduce those risks. I don't think you can ever eliminate 100% any circumstance that Mother Nature can throw at you, but if you can deal with the risk management processes that might occur by weather, it's a prudent thing to do.

I do want to comment a little bit on some of the watershed groups in my riding of O'Leary-Inverness. We have the Harmony watershed group which is a newer group, and I know I share that watershed with the hon. House leader there. Harmony watershed, William Yeo is the coordinator there, and I think Blair Yeo was the president of that group.

I happened to take the opportunity to go to their annual meeting and hear some of the work that they're doing there, and that is an example of how the community can work together with the agricultural community. They were explaining that they were going and walking watersheds, streams or waterways and they happened to notice where there might be a risky area. They were then going and approaching that particular landowner in that situation and identifying the risk and then talking about the ALUS program and how that can be of help to that landowner, to encourage them to implement some of the recommendations under the ALUS program and enhance the environmental programs that we have.

Mr. M. Currie: Is Eric Clements on that?

Mr. Henderson: Eric's not in that particular riding but we'll talk about that a little later on.

Anyway, in the Harmony watershed group, they have done some good things. I know each watershed does focus on different things. Like I talked out with the House leader, their biggest issue there happens to be the beaver issue. I was talking to William Yeo at their annual meeting. They trapped over 52 beavers themselves as a watershed group in the Harmony watershed. The environmental degradation that the beaver's doing to that area - because it's a fairly large, flat area - is disappointing. So by removing some of those beavers and taking the pressure off that area is truly recommended.

The other watershed group going a little farther west is the Lot 11 watershed group. It's also a newer watershed group. Karen Rank is the coordinator there and Mark Bishop is the president. I know a few others. Peter Bulger is one of the farmers that's on that particular watershed group. Karen Kelly's another individual.

They're just in the process of identifying where some of the risky properties are. I know they also have a real problem with beavers in that area as well. Once again, identifying those locations, GPSing, and then putting together a watershed management plan for each of the creeks and rivers. I know I had the opportunity to see some of the rivers that they're focusing on and I'm encouraging all landowners to work with that watershed group to try to take away some of the risk that might be involved, as well as to maybe participate a little more on the ALUS program and take advantage of monies that would be available for that.

The next watershed group is the Trout River watershed group. Obviously we mentioned Trout River. There are, I think, two, maybe even three, Trout Rivers on Prince Edward Island. The one I'm referring to is in the western end of the Island. Dave Biggar was the pioneer of that particular watershed. I

think we certainly can see that is the prime example of really good watershed management and farm buying because the Trout River watershed - I'll bet you today that there will be an - well, actually I think they hold back maybe two weeks on their opening season of fishing in that particular watershed. But I'm told that the fish population in that particular watershed is beyond imagination and the diversity of fish species in that watershed is really impressive, with salmon and trout.

I know from a tourism perspective, I know a number of our caucus have toured the Trout River trail, and it is a really impressive, just like a nice leisurely walk. It's just like walking through a golf course or a park. You can fish and they do a lot of things to encourage participation by the general public to fish. They have a creel survey so they've got some real hard significant facts and numbers of how to regenerate a stream

that had a lot of pressures from farm practices from the past. Dave Biggar, although he's not with us any more, we certainly commend his efforts and foresight at that particular time.

His new predecessor is every bit as good as Dave. I'll talk about him. It's Dale Cameron. He's put together a really good project there and I know he's got some great buy-in from the general public and the community. That watershed goes right into O'Leary. It probably has the greatest farm pressures of any watershed on it, maybe outside of the Dunk River and that area. They've done amazing work there, just amazing work. Because they're so far advanced that they've done all of the tributaries that go into the Trout River, the brooks, the streams, and we're really starting to see some great benefits there.

Like I say, they don't have the issues around beaver as much as the other two watersheds I'd mentioned, but their issues tend to be more farm practices and that's where they can - with use of the ALUS program, use that as a great encouragement and enticement for better farm practices. Certainly want to commend them there.

The other watershed group that I have is the West Point watershed group, and it's focusing a lot on the Big Pierre Jacques River and the Little Pierre Jacques River. I know the Glenwood Pond, it's a dammed property, and they've got a nice pond there. That's where the PEI Pondhockey Championship started out, at the Glenwood Pond. Once again, they've done some great work in enhancing the stream environment there, and with the new bridge that the minister of transportation and public works, the Glenwood Bridge, has put in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: We're certainly seeing the

risks to the environment from all other sources besides agriculture.

Mr. MacKinley: (Indistinct).

Mr. Henderson: It's unbelievable how nice a bridge that turned out. I know I was talking to Elton Ellis, the watershed coordinator on that particular watershed, and he was saying that it's unbelievable how aesthetically pleasing the property looks now and how many tourists are actually going and visiting. In fact, I'm going to have a little chat with the minister of transportation about a little bit of gravel on the parking lot there.

Mr. MacKinley: Strong members up there. Liberal members up there.

Mr. Henderson: Yeah.

So that's where our government - working together with the community, with the agricultural community, with the tourism community - can make significant impacts in a rural area like mine that has had its challenges over the last number of years.

I guess I would be remiss not to identify the Mill River watershed and Mr. Eric Clements. Although that's in the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville's riding, there are some of the tributaries do go into -

Mr. M. Currie: (Indistinct) running good up there.

Mr. Henderson: - O'Leary-Inverness. I guess they have had some challenges there. I'm sure the Member from Alberton-Roseville will work through those issues and hopefully get that watershed doing the great things that it can do as well.

The other thing I guess I was going to mention on the ALUS program was the issue of planting trees. That's where the

watershed groups can help in coordination with the ALUS program and the landowner to try to plant some trees to do some biodiversity in the species that make up that buffer zoned area. I think those are only good things as well to provide shade for the trout and other fish species and also to help reduce any potential runoff that might occur.

So when I hear that there are 350 farms or properties that have been signed up under the ALUS program, I'm sure there are far more properties out there that can take advantage of this program. I do encourage the minister to do what he can to try to deal with the budget struggles, to try to get as much money to do as much enticement as we can to get more farmers and landowners involved and to improve the situation. Whether it's a million dollars or half a million dollars per year going towards this program, I think it's money that's very well spent, and it does spread the load that all of those risks aren't borne by the farmer and all of those costs to improve the properties aren't borne by the farmer. The taxpayers have a share in this, too.

I've always said to farmers and to landowners alike, we all live in these communities. We all share the same resources, whether it's our air or water or our soil. I believe we all have to share in the responsibilities of protecting that and share in the responsibilities of improving the situations as they exist.

With that, it gives me great pleasure to second the motion to commend the provincial government for the support it provides to the farmers and landowners under the ALUS program for the adoption of, and I quote this part: sound stewardship practices. I think that is the key.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Do you require the podium?

Leader of the Opposition: No.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm happy to stand and support this motion. To give you a little history, John MacQuarrie, the deputy minister from Environment, Energy and Forestry, used to work with a group called Delta Waterfowl. Back in 2005-2006 he actually had Teresa Mellish work on this policy around the ALUS program. It's really great to see that it's taken off in full steam.

The only other area that wasn't covered by both the mover and seconder is probably to encourage government to use a broad lens when they're adjudicating proposals, especially in the area where organic farmers are trying to not - they can't use fertilizer, so in their system of agriculture it's really important for - to use cattle in their system so they can use manure on their crops.

I really encourage the Department of Agriculture, when they're adjudicating proposals, to make sure - because this is a really good way of reducing the carbon imprint. It's not just for watersheds, etc. It's an exciting opportunity for PEI, and I understand last year, although there was a million dollars in the program, perhaps only \$350,000 was used. So we would really encourage government, it is a really good program, but to really look at it in a broad way, and especially as a number of farmers are looking to more sustainable agriculture.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any other members who

would like to speak to the motion before I go to the mover to close debate?

The hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

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

I'm quite pleased to stand and support this motion. A lot of what I was going to say has certainly been said, but I want to congratulate the Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier and the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development who actually went together to get this launched back when it was. It takes a lot of teamwork and working together and working with the farm groups and people out in the country there to get this program off and get them all to agree and to buy into it.

Some people say it's pretty tough to do that. It kind of reminded me of a poem I mentioned. Everybody's heard it before. I'd like to just go through it, and that was "It Couldn't Be Done":

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But, he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one has done it";
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,

There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you one
by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle it in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That "couldn't be done," and you'll do it.

Again, I want to congratulate the ministers who put together - and the government too for taking this project on. I know from working in the agricultural community, a lot of times you come up with a new idea and the buy-in is not there. Even if you offer the farmer a few dollars to take this on, he's had enough money to join in the plan. I'm really pleased the federation came on because the federation speaks for a lot of farmers. They're a well-respected group out there, and with their leadership, as well, they can bring their membership in, and more and more people will join in.

I know the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that not all the budget was used last year. I mean, it's just starting up and getting going. We do have to spread the work on it a little more because it is a terrific program.

It was mentioned too about the watershed groups. I know there's a watershed group in the Stratford area too - the SAWIG group, Stratford and Area Watershed Improvement Group - that are really involved in coming on in the area represented by myself and the Member from Stratford-Kinlock. That group is growing all the time and they're dealing with the streams in our area out there that sometimes we wonder if there's even any water in them any more, because they're filling in and things like that.

There's a pond out in my end of the district that had the berm burst on it and basically drained right out. It was, while I was growing up, a super fishing pond that a lot

of the kids went to. One of the things that the SAWIG group wants to do is encourage more people to get into fishing. Here we are, the opening day of fishing season - I know there's a group that has discussed on several occasions: How do we get more people out in our environment using our property, using the streams and really get hooked on fishing again, and get hooked on looking at the environment, looking at the area, our district? Because it is a beautiful district. I believe right now they're working with the landowner of that pond - this is one of the ideas - to get that berm built back up.

There's an environmental crisis there at the present time. You can't touch that berm, but maybe with the SAWIG group working with the department of environment we can reestablish that pond.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: No, no.

It's a different spot. It is quite a hole at the moment, though, but we hope to fill it up with water and put fish back in it. That would be, I think, terrific. A lot of trout come out of that.

Because we have to be careful of our environment, that's for sure. As a farmer myself you hear about these fish kills. I hate to even mention the word, but through programs like the ALUS program, and conservation and caring for the buffer zones and that, we can be better stewards of our land, that's for sure, because we don't want any fish kills. I mean, I'm a fisherman myself - sports fisherman - and I was up at 5:00 this morning, and I was out on the pond. At 5:55 I caught my first trout, and I limited out at 6:15.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: So I got my limit in twenty

minutes, and I was home and Joanne and I had - the hon. member there was talking about four-foot trout. That wasn't quite the size, but they were really good, and we were eating breakfast at 7:00, fresh trout.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: Pardon me?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: Yeah, it was fresh. It was good, too. But anyway -

An Hon. Member: I'm starving.

Mr. McIsaac: - that's what you get from working together with the environment on the conservation area. The ALUS project - you pack a little on top, it carries - it's terrific. But we have to spread the word about the benefits of this.

I know people talk about the buffer zone issues. I even had questions on the buffer zone myself. But as a dairy farmer, not tilling the land right to the shoreline, that was a concern to me and to many of the other dairy farmers, but we worked through that problem and we can break that land up every now and then. With proper stewardship we can make this thing work.

The added benefit of having a few dollars thrown in is definitely a bonus. I think we have to continue to work with the federation, with the NFU, with the young farmers. There's a group that's really keen and active and wanting to be more active, and they are the next generation - actually, some of them are the generation right now that are taking over some of the farms. So we spread the word with that and they're coming onside very well, and that's terrific.

We have a lot of work to do. I believe this program actually started in Manitoba, when

it was the first province that put it in. Again, there's a group that took an idea that nobody thought could be done and tried it out there. But to bring it here and bring it forward, I really want to support this motion, compliment those who put it in place, and ask everyone to spread the word to let farmers out there know that if you do give up a bit of your land for the ALUS program, there is compensation in it. Maybe we'll all spread that word that the help is there and to join in on the environmental plans.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to rise and support this motion. The recognition of our farmers and the landholders - the stewards of the land - I do believe that they really care. We have wonderful people looking after our environment. So, for their work effort and their caring in protecting our environment I thank them and I truly support them.

As our hon. members have mentioned their watershed groups, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the Wheatley River watershed group. It's just an absolutely wonderful organization. Their can-do in terms of the work that they do out there. For all concerned, thank you.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion before I go to the mover to close debate?

The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

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

It gives me great pleasure to rise this evening and speak about this great program, the ALUS program. I commend the minister of agriculture for this program and for all it means to Prince Edward Island.

I would be remiss, I guess, if I didn't mention my own watershed group. There has been a lot of discussion around watershed groups across the province. In the Souris area we have probably the largest watershed group in the province, one of the most active, and probably the watershed group that has shown the most leadership with any watershed group in the province.

No disrespect to any watershed group, I think they all do great work. But the work of Mr. Fred Cheverie and those that work with him over the summer is widely recognized across the province. I know Fred received some calls from right across the province seeking his advice and his input around what other watershed groups are trying to accomplish. A lot of watershed groups aspire to be, I guess, where Fred is today. He's ahead of the curve a lot with respect to the great work that he's done.

I guess when you look at watersheds - and myself, I live on the Souris River. I think of Souris River watershed. I look out and I see the river out of my front window. It's not that big of an area, but if you look at what the watershed encompasses, all the tributaries and the area that they cover, it's absolutely amazing, and the great work that these groups do, coupled with the work of our farmers through the ALUS program. It's bringing a lot of great things to the water environment.

Of course, our Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development is certainly aware of the importance of

protecting our watershed across the province. A lot of our aquaculture programs occur in tributaries right across the province. It's really a vital importance that we protect and maintain them because of the importance of our aquaculture industry as well in the province. I guess watersheds and the protection of watersheds applies to many government departments.

It's mentioned here tonight, they're a value to the tourism industry. Again, to fishing and to the aquaculture industry, to the environment. It's all of our responsibility to look after the environment and to look after watershed. The ALUS program has gone a long way.

I had the opportunity to attend meetings where the watershed group and farmers have come together. In my part of the province, in the east end of the province, there is a tremendous partnership between the farm community and the watershed groups.

I believe last year the hon. minister of agriculture presented an award to a farmer from my district, Mr. Peter Townsend, who is widely recognized in the province for his forward thinking work in respect to environmental protection and alternate farming methods, and of course this work through the ALUS program. He's proven himself to be very environmentally conscious. It's great to see that when people take that kind of an initiative that what they do is recognized, and it was a pleasure to be part of that presentation there last year with Mr. Townsend and for him to receive that award.

The farm community in the province sometimes has the finger pointed at them when we see fish kills in the Dunk River and that type of thing. But while there are times where they may be a contributing factor, they're not the sole factor, and it's great to see that the farming community is taking

steps to try and reduce their impact on watersheds and on our environment. Very pleased to be part of a government that's insisted in doing that by providing a program where if they do take land that, I guess, has potential if farmed, to impact our environment, if they take it out of use that they are somewhat compensated for that. We are seeing the benefits of that more and more year after year. It's a partnership, and it's a partnership we need to foster and grow.

I would encourage anyone with respect to watersheds - and I certainly don't mean to put Fred Cheverie on the spot or give him any undo work to do there. He's very knowledgeable, extremely knowledgeable, and extremely dedicated. I had the opportunity to meet with him just this past Monday to go over his plans for the summer. We're also pleased to support the watershed through our Jobs For Youth program, and I'm hoping that actually through our Community Internship Program we can find a recent graduate, whether that be a biology student or an environmental science student, that can go and hopefully work with the watershed in the area. It think it would be a real win-win. It would be a great opportunity for the student. I know with all the work that they've done up there, there would be a tremendous learning opportunity and also would provide a much needed support and service to the watershed group itself.

So we're hoping that we can identify that recent graduate who would be a good fit for the program and we'll continue to work to try and accomplish that as well.

I want to again thank the minister of agriculture for bringing this great motion forward. I want to thank the great Member from O'Leary-Inverness for seconding the motion and giving us some insights as to what's happening in the western part of the

province, and by the looks of things thank the members of this Legislature for their support for this great motion.

Again, I would encourage our farming community and our watershed groups to continue to work together in the province for the betterment of not only agriculture, but for the betterment of our environment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, would like to stand this evening in support of this motion and congratulate both ministers - as was brought forward by the Member from Vernon River-Stratford - in thanking both of these ministers for the great effort that they have put forward over the last three years in order to bring ALUS to the state that it is in right now. They have been great proponents of what we have stood by with this ALUS program. Every program needs a champion and these two have escorted this program into the history books and will continue to watch it grow as we continue on in this mandate.

As always, I'm always inspired by the Member from Vernon River-Stratford in the way that he always eloquently brings forward his points with his little stories and poems. Always inspires us to greater things.

It's a wonderful program that has been brought forward and the Member from Vernon River-Stratford brought up the fact that maybe all the money was not spent on this program. It usually will reflect on a couple of things. I think the main thing right now is the fact that most farmers believe

truly in what it stands for, but it may not be the appropriate amount of compensation per acre at this time.

That's the thing that we have to look at. If we could ever make it worth the while to put more money into the program to help farmers accomplish exactly what we know is the right thing to do with this land, it would be the right thing for us to do as a government as well. So we have to continue to put priority on it, continue to give support to these two wonderful ministers and make sure that we continue this effort in the right vein.

We have a tremendous group of farmers on Prince Edward Island and in my district in particular, Kensington-Malpeque, I would have to suggest that we have the most proactive group of farmers on Prince Edward Island. They were really ground-breakers with regard to the way that they did berms and terracing on their farms. We have a little bit of a hilly area in our wonderful farmland, but they took full advantage of technology in making sure that they could be at the forefront of what is needed in the way of eco-farming. They have done a tremendous job there.

One of the great farmers in our area, Wayne Cousins, who just recently sold his milk quota, was one amongst the first to ever see what was needed with regard to saving land and putting environmental concerns ahead of the almighty dollar, and donated a huge tract of land to the L. M. Montgomery Land Trust that sits in a special planning area out in my district. This is probably one of the most well known pieces of land that you would see on our phone books or in any other kind of publication, right out on Cousins Shore. This is the kind of efforts that are needed by all of the farming community and all of us here right across Prince Edward Island. My hat is off to Mr. Cousins and to all those that continue to put

in this kind of effort.

If we ever had the kind of dollars that are needed to put that kind of land aside for eternity it would be wonderful. We know that we don't have those at this time, but it's groups like L. M. Montgomery Land Trust that continue to put forward that effort, both personally and as a group, to make sure that those kinds of lands are always at the forefront in our mind.

We have been in our area - and I'd have to agree with the wonderful Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, that indeed Fred Cheverie is the leading expert on watersheds. But the two watersheds, one that completely engulfs my district and the one that sits right on my border, that one being the other Trout River Watershed that the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness spoke about earlier on, it's headed up by Rob Sharkey. Rob Sharkey has been in this business for almost as long as Fred Cheverie and does a tremendous job with that watershed.

But over the past two years the Kensington North Watershed has taken up three of the different watersheds that are in our group and have all come together as a tremendous effort and have consolidated their knowledge and resources to make sure that this watershed really comes forward in a great way. That's headed up by the president, Dale Adams, and our manager of all activities, Barry Murray. The lead hand out on the watershed is Janie Adams. Janie had a tough winter and we're hoping that she rebounds in a big way to lead this effort gain in the spring.

My hat goes off to these folks. They all work independently and without compensation for many hours every year and we couldn't do it without them. I'm very proud of our government that we have put the types of money that we have into the

watershed efforts here across Prince Edward Island and boosted them by 200% over the last three years. It's a very proud moment that we can stand and say that here.

Madam Speaker, I just want to end on that note saying that, again, hats off to the gentlemen that have helped bring this to the forefront here on Prince Edward Island. I can tell you that as a government we'll continue to put more effort into the ALUS program.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to rise tonight as well to support this very important resolution brought forward by the minister of agriculture.

As a member representing rural Queens, Prince Edward Island, this is certainly a very important topic to be discussing, important in terms of our farming community within the central to North Shore area of Queens County, and how this type of program is enhancing the quality of our environment but also supporting our farming community.

I think when the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development tabled the rural development strategy, I think it showed government's commitment, and the minister responsible for the environment, the minister of agriculture, the minister of rural development, our commitment as a government in goal number four in that section of environmental conservation in the rural economy. Because in that it states the different actions that this government is going to be taking, including the ALUS

program, towards environmental conservation in rural PEI. Whether it be protecting our groundwater, whether it be consulting on land use planning, amending the Lands Protection Act, supporting conservation through the ALUS program, these are all examples of how Prince Edward Island, of how this government under the leadership of our Premier, is contributing to the conservation of rural Prince Edward Island.

What's important to know, as well, is the importance that Islanders put in this. When the minister of rural development's department went out and consulted with Islanders environmental issues were the second-highest rated concerns identified in the online surveys and were prominent in the public consultations. I think that's very critical about the importance that this plays for PEI.

The three commissions that addressed matters relevant to rural areas also made recommendations on land and environmental measures, including the Commission on Nitrates and Groundwater, the Commission on the Land and Local Governance, and the Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Agrifood on PEI. There's been a lot of significant progress that has been made, but I think with ALUS that we're talking about here tonight, and the investment that the province is making into that, and the issues around protecting our groundwater, and utilizing the document of the nitrates commission report, and putting our foot forward so to speak, in terms of those recommendations, and how a community based approach to consultation around land use planning through the Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, through that department, through the land and local governance commissioner's report, how this government amended the *Prince Edward Island Lands Protection Act*, to order landowners who are at their land

holding limits to set aside 40% of their land holdings permanently for conservation.

This, what we're talking about here tonight, about the ALUS program, just demonstrates how our commitment is in this province. It does.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: It certainly demonstrates this government's commitment. It shows how we are working with our agricultural community, because I think that's how it has to work if we're going to improve our environment.

Let's face it, on PEI most of Prince Edward Island is made up of agricultural lands, and we have to ensure that we're working with our farmers and consulting on a regular basis with them. ALUS supports and complements the efforts of the watershed management groups. Like the hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs stated, we have excellent watershed groups.

I know a lot of the members have spoke about their organizations in their districts. We're so thankful because many of these people do this on a volunteer basis, and have lots of expertise. It just amazes me the amount of expertise that exists in our communities relative to supporting through the ALUS, because a lot of the word gets out to our farmers in community, and programs like this, through those community groups like our watershed groups. I know the hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs talked about Rob Sharkey through the Trout River Environmental Committee Inc. They do a lot of work in our area. Another person that was a precursor to Rob in that organization was Terry Perry who paved the way in Central Queens area for a lot of policy within the watershed movement.

As well, within our district I certainly want to thank Andrew Lush and the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group. They do an amazing amount of work in Central Queens. Also to Tracy Gallant and to the Wheatley River Improvement Group, because it's an incredible visit if you would like to make, and it just shows how ALUS and farmers are working together. Last year through the Island Community Fund, through the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, we were able to deliver dollars to the Wheatley River project, to see the restoration of Rackham's Pond. That has been a significant, positive thing for the community. We've seen farmers, the family, the Ling family, the Rackham family, and MacRae families all work together, because it was their lands bordering this project. Silt had come in, and obviously the pond didn't look like it did 50 years ago. But thanks to work by Wayne (Indistinct) and many others in the community we now have a beautiful pond that is - I'm sure this spring, with the new season, it's going to be even more beautiful that the work that was done last fall. It's been great.

That demonstrates projects such as ALUS, how we can work with our farmers and the community working together. I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier for his commitment and working in collaboration with groups such as the PEI Federation of Agriculture. Because we were at their annual meeting in New London this past - I believe it was in January or February that I was able to go to their meeting. At this time the minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier and the Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry were there, and this was when this was announced, and it seemed to be very well received with farmers in the room, and it's only going to be supported more into the future from this government.

So, in close, I want to again reiterate my

support for this motion, again, support and value how our Premier, how our government, is supporting the collaborative work that can be done on the environmental side, the agricultural side, working together, because only by working together can we beautify this province. PEI is such a beautiful province, we are so thankful to live where we are, but we have to work together for positive solutions and to have environmental conservation in the future for our rural economy here in PEI.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to lend my support to this motion, and to commend the Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier for bringing this forward and for his insight into putting this program in place and expanding it, working with the farmers in resolving any of their concerns.

Coming from a district that is dependent on collaboration between the farmers and the fishers, with the PEI Shellfish Association being headed in my district, it's very vital that the collaboration that goes on to preserve the waterways in that area where you have the world famous Malpeque oysters by the Burleigh Brothers Seafood Ltd., and certainly Leslie Hardy & Sons Ltd., and the uniqueness of the area.

We do also have the watershed groups that are vital to keeping our streams and estuaries flowing, and down in the Grand River area as well, it's a rich fishing ground as well for oysters. I would like to commend our watershed group that's in the - it's now called the Richmond Bay Watershed

Association Inc. Originally it was the Richmond and Area, and it borders on the Evangeline-Miscouche boundary, as well as the O'Leary-Inverness boundary. I really would like to commend them. They've expanded now and joined forces with those in the Tyne Valley area. They're working together to enhance, and they have done a wonderful job. I know the Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier did come up and visit that particular area and saw the work that was done in behind Dan MacLean's farm, and the fantastic work that was done in putting in the protection areas for the fish.

I would like to just mention the work that Leonard MacDonald has done from the Grand River area. Kathy Gallant is our coordinator, she's a fantastic lady who puts in hour upon hour in her efforts. The farmers in the area have been really supportive in working with that group, and coming with the dairy farmers I know it was a bit of a concern, and also we have a large potato farm area in the district as well.

The collaboration has been working, and it's evident when you see the Tyne Valley dam. We had some concerns there. It's starting to clean up now. The Trout River area, we have a Trout River, too, it is just a wonderful program which encourages those to move forward with new practices, and to work together.

I just want to rise in support of the motion and commend all the farmers that are working together to move forward on the program.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak?

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

Mr. LeClair: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up and speak to this motion as well, in favour of this motion. I recall when I was minister of agriculture, that the ALUS program was on the agenda at quite a few meetings that we had across the country. At that time I think Manitoba or one province was initiating some of it, but since - at that time - actually the now minister of agriculture was the then-minister of environment and he was a champion for the ALUS program and took it over. He liked it so much he took it with him, so now he took it from environment and brought it into agriculture. I think it's an excellent program and I commend him for the efforts that he's made in moving it forward.

As the minister said, as far as the rural development strategy, there's a big part of it dedicated to the ALUS program, and protect our groundwater and land use issues and lands protection act. Very important issues here on Prince Edward Island, to the aquaculture industry especially. Some of the benefits we have like cultured finfish - over \$1.6 million worth to our economy; bar clams, 300,000; softshell clams, 600,000; quahogs, 500,000, pretty near 600,000; mussels \$22 million; oysters, pretty near \$6 million. All associated with our rivers and streams and inlets and bays.

It's very important to keep this ALUS program moving forward. It's a great benefit to everyone. It allows farmers to do things that they could probably not normally afford to do. It allows them to keep the environment at the forefront, which was, no doubt, at the forefront always, but it affords them a little bit of leeway to do more things in that area.

We have watershed groups in the Tignish area. Arsenault's Pond comes to mind. It's a great success. They've taken the dam down, the fish ladder down, and did the work that

had to be done there. Wouldn't have been done without the funding through the department of the environment to the watersheds. An excellent program. They're expanding and going through more ponds and streams in District 27 and doing a great job there.

When I was young, where I lived, we have a stream behind all of our farms - runs the whole length of the road we're on, and the district we're in I guess - and we called it Pig Brook. But there was never - I don't know why they called it Pig Brook, but anyway -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) all the hog farms.

Mr. LeClair: There were no hog farms at that time, but when we were young and growing up there were more of us kids in the streams and the brooks than there ever were animals. So I don't know - we'll have to fence out or put bigger fences - if it was back then they'd probably have to fence us out, but we used to have a great time playing in the brooks and streams. I don't know if we are moving ahead.

We have the PEI Shellfish Association, who are big proponents of cleaning up the streams and the environment. They have a project which they want to work on getting algae out of the rivers and streams. We're working with them to see if there is any way we can make use of the algae that they would take out of the streams. If we can find a benefit for it, or a value for it, it would be great. If we could get the machinery - there is a plan that they're looking at a piece of machinery that would be able to take it out of the streams and clean up a certain section of river at a time. It would be a big job, but it is certainly a great initiative and we are working with them as a department to see how this could be done. But we would like to find a use and a value for that algae,

which would make it viable and maybe be able to pay some portion of that machine and make it valuable to the industry.

I don't know if cottage owners, or maybe people along the streams and rivers that live there, would want to look at it, too, and fund it in a certain way. I don't know, but it would be great. I think we are moving in the right direction. We are cleaning up our streams to a great extent in the last number of years. The weather has changed and things have changed. The sun is becoming hotter and I think all the temperature of the water and all that has impacted on algae and what grows in our streams. But I think we recognize that through all these programs - and we're working together and moving forward and I think it's all positive.

It certainly is - even with the finfish, you don't realize the amount of water that they use in those operations. It has to be very clean and good water. It all stems back to how we work with our environment and keep our streams and bays clean.

The oyster industry is a very important industry, and especially the wild fishery. They work hard and everybody is well-aware of the streams and what has to be done. We have weather issues that will shut down an area for a long period of time. It's not good, but I mean, those things happen. I think if we keep working this way and manage our environment better, all these industries will move forward and benefit.

So I want to thank the minister for this motion, and it's not a problem to stand up and support it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion before I go to the mover to close debate?

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to thank the minister for bringing this motion forward and give my support to it. I'd like to thank the farming community and our watershed individuals that do such a wonderful job in looking after enhancing our streams. It's nice to see the streams come to life again.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion before I go to the mover to close debate?

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier to close debate on the motion.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure I rise to close debate on this particular motion.

This ALUS program is near and dear to my heart. Constantly in our department we think and analyze: How do we apply agriculture to the land? That is how most of the farmers actually think. They continually assess how they open up the earth, how they get seeds in the earth. The soil has a nutrient holding capacity to feed a crop. Most farmers love the land like a mother loves a child. They do care, and we want to be there as a department for the farming community as they go forward.

I also want to thank and give recognition to the Keystone Agricultural Producers of Manitoba for conceiving the idea of ALUS program some four or five years ago. The program was developed there, in cooperation with Delta Waterfowl group.

The program then was adopted by one county in Ontario, Norfolk County, which is just outside of Hamilton, Ontario. I had the privilege of going there with the deputy of the Environment, Energy and Forestry department that I came from and we talked to growers, producers. They had the same issues we had. We went out onto the farms, did a visit, and had an understanding of what the program was and how they were going to fund it. That's the tricky part of all of this. How do you reward landowners for ecological goods and services that they provide society? That was a key challenge for us.

We came back and we were able to convince the rest of government and my colleagues that this process is really important. At that time we had gotten two pilots going - which was one in Souris and the other one in Trout River, which is north of Kensington - or sort of east of Kensington I guess. We had two pilots going. People were buying into this concept, which is extremely important.

There's another point I would like to make absolutely clear here tonight in the House. We've always spoke of the ALUS program with regards to the farmers being eligible. This is landowners being eligible. There are all kinds of people that own land - or we'll refer to them as landowners - that may have one farm, two farms, or three farms that their father had. Those farms, every one is eligible in those terms and conditions - not just actively farming. People do rent their land - one thing or another - or keeping the farm in the family name, so those folks are eligible as well.

Another very unique attribute about the Prince Edward Island ALUS program is we are small, as a province, but our program is Island-wide. No other province in Canada - we believe - can carry out an Island-wide program. We're special, we're tiny, but we have an Island-wide program that we think

sets us apart from anyone else.

The ALUS program is a completely voluntary program. It's not a mandatory program, it's not government developing a program and saying: You have to do this. It is a voluntary program. If you participate in the program you are eligible for economic goods and services surrounding the service you're providing to society. Very unique, and we are getting community buy-in now, and that is they key to the whole thing.

Our government see it as very important to establish watershed groups. So we've got watershed groups out there that - probably 27 to 29 of those groups - and they're dividing up approximately - I believe the number's a million dollars in those watershed groups.

The watershed groups are consulting with the landowners in the area. They are working together to solve the problem. That is the way to solve it. Government cannot solve it alone. The landowners cannot solve it alone. But society - if we collectively put our thoughts together - we can solve the problems and apply agriculture to the land in a safe and equitable way.

Communication on this is extremely important. It is growing. Some landowners said: There must be something negative here. Are you going to come out and tax me or something? No, we are not. They are starting to buy into the program. It is growing. I believe it will continue to grow and we'll have pretty much pretty much full participation on PEI over the next number of years. I think that's extremely important.

I am excited to have been involved, along with a lot of other very credible people within the department, to establish the ALUS program. I was excited to be able to take it with me when I moved from that department and have it in agriculture. I am

very excited about that. I think it has a bright future. I think we can solve our issues and we can have a high-quality, safe, well-respected agriculture community on Prince Edward Island like we ought to have.

With that, I'll close my remarks and say thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. members, you've heard the debate on the motion.

Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour, signify by saying 'yea.'

Some Hon. Members: Yea!

Speaker: Contrary minded?

Motion's carried and it is unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Sheridan: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Speaker, that Motion No. 18, now be read.

Speaker: Hon. members, this motion has already been read and the debate was adjourned by the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford.

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

I think I was just about to finish up there. There was a couple of things I just want to go over again. Strongly supporting the

minister of agriculture on this because there is quite a crisis out there in the agriculture community and the non-supply managed commodities. We do have to come up with a strategy for the red meat industry, that is for sure. It takes all the partners working together on this: federal government, provincial government, the farmers, the consumers, every one of us.

I just want to repeat - I don't know if I went over these stats or not, but I want to repeat them again, if I did. Just shows you what is coming in to our country here and I think it's pretty significant. So these are just some Canadian import stats.

In the last 40 years red meat imports have gone up 600%. We import more than 53% of our vegetables and almost all of our fruit. In a 15-year period our imports increased 160% while our population rose only 15%. In 2004 Alberta imported more than \$170 million worth of fresh vegetables and they exported \$400 thousand worth. Ontario imports more than 400 billion worth of produce more than it exports. We bring in cucumbers, tomatoes, things like that, not just exotic fruit. For every apple we export we import five. In 2007 Nova Scotia produced half as many blueberries as it did four years earlier. If this continues, we may lose the ability to produce many of the foods that we eat. This impacts our environment, our economy and our neighbourhood.

Local farms now get less money than many foreign farms. Fresh food can take days or even weeks to get to us and it loses nutritional value along the way. Local food can be available in hours. It's right here. We have to partake of the bounty that we produce here, return a good dollar to the farmer who does not - I think as I mentioned before - does not want to exist based on grants, subsidies, bailouts, that sort of thing. They want to receive the return for their product and the return for their labour from

the marketplace.

So again, we all are players in this, whether we're consumers, whether we're farmers, whether we're provincial government, federal government, or whatever. But we really need to come on side on this, work with the minister of agriculture, work with all levels of government, come up with a strategy. Maybe the Maritime strategy is the way to go.

Anyway, I just want to stand and finish up by saying I certainly support this resolution and support the minister and the efforts he's putting forward on this matter.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion before I go the mover to close debate?

The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, want to rise and throw the input of O'Leary-Inverness into this motion of regional red meat strategy.

I have to say, as a former farmer, I've been involved in both the cow-calf industry and the feedlot industry on my own farm at home. I've got as high as having a hundred head feedlot. I suffered through the anguish of trying to make ends meet on a farm of that size. So I can understand the duress that those people are going through. I sometimes say: If I only had have gotten out of the industry a couple of years earlier I might have a little more financial resources in my bank account. But anyhow, having said that, I certainly farm from a love of farming and a love of agriculture. My wife always said that

my second passion besides her was that I liked to watch cows eat. I don't know what that really means about me. But anyhow. I understand the realities there.

I think when I sit back and I sort of look at what some of the challenges that are out there, I see one of the issues is simply: How do you compete on a global marketplace with these other countries, whether it's Uruguay or Argentina or Africa or whatever, when they just don't have the stresses that we have from trying to enhance our environment, the regulations, rules, infrastructure and stuff? Those are all things that we don't have.

But as Atlantic Provinces, to note that we aren't self sufficient in providing beef for our citizens, says that there is a market there. But when we tie our prices to an international market it doesn't make any sense. That's why I see that when an area like Atlantic Canada is not self-sufficient in beef and we're such a long ways from the other Canadian markets that there needs to be an Atlantic Canadian strategy. When the Government of Canada develops programs that has to take into account for that. We need to issue that.

I think that the other thing that I look at, when we had the opportunity to go to Tanzania and we saw how dry an area that is, but I think that there was a joke that there was like 40 million people in Tanzania and 40 million head of cattle. Now it's certainly far different than our cattle here on Prince Edward Island. But they raise cattle in those kinds of circumstances. When you look at Prince Edward Island, the one thing that I would say that we are unrivalled in in the world is our ability to grow forages. We have tremendous grasses, we have a tempered climate that grows those well, and we also have the situation where we require a rotation for our potato crops. With that, that usually means cereals. That's also

conducive to growing good, high-quality red meat.

So that's why I think that we do have an opportunity here to do something good. We just need that support from the federal government to allow some of these programs to reflect that. I do think that we have to really seriously look at becoming an independent marketplace on tying our price.

One of the issues that when I was in the beef industry when we were talking about the discussions, the preliminary discussions about the beef plant was that we were looking at tying our prices to 7 cents back of what the Ontario price was. At the end of the day it was my one reason why I backed out of becoming a shareholder in the beef plant. That if we're trying to compete against the Ontario marketplace and we're already pegging out price at 7 cents behind that, the chances of having any great success in this industry from an economic perspective is going to be somewhat limited. So in the end I decided to back out. I guess I'll say at this point in time it was probably a wise move for me financially when I see where I'm standing today.

But anyway, the other thing that I wanted to mention - and I know with the Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter, we share the Central Prince grasslands in our ridings. At one time, I think there was thousands of cattle that used to be pastured in those lands and those were marginal farmlands in the area. Once again, grew good grasses and it was an opportunity for cows and calves and dairy farmers to pasture the cattle in an effective way. Even right today I think they're down to a few hundred head of cattle in those and coming to a point where it's becoming not viable for that organization to sustain itself. So that's truly unfortunate.

I think the other thing that I see from a tourism - the pastoral setting of Prince

Edward Island and the green fields and the potatoes, there is certainly a lure of that for tourists, but to see whether it's horses out on the pasture land or to see cattle, cow-calf, dairy cattle, to me that's true pastoral beauty, I guess. I think if we don't have cattle, the cow-calf dairy industry, those are going to be losses that we are going to have as a province to have those scenic settings with cattle in the fields. But we certainly can see that that marginal land is a great opportunity for the cattle industry, and I think we need to make use of that marginal land as best we can.

The feedlot industry, I know there are a few feedlots in my riding still left. I know Denton Ellis has a feedlot in the area. I'm not sure beyond that, I'm sure there is a couple more, but none come to mind. But I know Cameron MacDonald and -

Mr. M. Currie: Gerry Richard.

Mr. Henderson: Gerry Richard is in the hon. Government House Leader's riding. But anyway, some of those fellows have all gotten out of the cattle industry. I know Paul Smallman, there is another fellow that still has a feedlot, but he's really almost down to providing his own market, Paul Bob's Meat Shop. I think he's having some successes doing that, marketing his own products. But once again, that challenge of trying to compete on a global scale just isn't there. Like I say, when we go to countries like Tanzania and you see the amount of cattle that they have here, it's going to be darn tough to see that viable in the long term.

So anyway, with that I certainly truly understand the main struggles of the cattle industry that is facing Prince Edward Island as well as Atlantic Canada. Knowing the facts that we're not self-sufficient in the product, knowing the facts that we have prime forage land, we have cereals, we also have sometimes some (Indistinct) potatoes,

waste potatoes, that can be used for growing high-quality, highly efficient beef, I support for the Government of Canada to be requested to develop a flexible regional program that would respond to the needs and opportunities of the red meat industry in Atlantic Canada, in cooperation with industry and our provincial government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

It gives me I wouldn't say great pleasure to get up and speak to this resolution, because the beef industry has been in the tank for a long time. I don't know how those farmers are making a go of it, to tell you.

I farmed myself. I know what it was like. There are other farmers here. I don't know how many years ago that I sold my cattle. I had a cow-calf operation. I was just losing - if I could have broken even, I would have kept it. But when you got to go in your MLA salary to pay the bills, there's something wrong. I sold it. A young Mutch, Ernie Mutch I think, bought most of them. He bought the best of them. And guess what? A couple of years ago he sold his too. So he found out there was not money in it.

The problem you have in the beef industry - we have the meat plant here and it's federally inspected. But the problem we're running into is we're not self-sufficient in Atlantic Canada beef. The problem we're running into is Halifax container ports. Cattle from Uruguay, Argentina, can just float right up to the container port and when these institutions that we have, whether it be the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or the VG

Hospital or whatever it is, they look at buying whatever cuts they can provided it's graded to the cheapest price.

There's no way, I don't think, unless you have an awful lot of money to start with, anybody can compete with the independent market. Basically, we should be supplying our own markets here in Atlantic Canada. There's an opportunity for growth. But you can't supply your own market when you go up against farm countries that don't have the environment regulations, don't have the same type of health standards, don't have the same type of wages that we're paying here in the province and our meat packing plants and everything else right through the line.

I think what's probably is going to happen, it's going to go down. I was talking to a fellow tonight on the way in here. Actually I stopped in at Co-op and they got T-bone steak on for 5.49. That's one awful good buy. Co-op Atlantic. But anyway, I just happened to meet the guy who was leaving and he was telling me the farmer he was working for had 50 feeders. Nobody was looking for them so he sent 10 over to the sale. Now this farmer is out in the member from Crapaud Hazel Grove area, a very good farmer. Sent 10 over to tourist sale. He averaged 67 cents for them (Indistinct). For 600-, 700-pound feeders.

Even I said to him: Well, a dollar and a quarter he could break even or make some money. The guy said: Even if he had to get a dollar. But what's incentive? Is there anybody that keeps going at that rate? We put in our buildings, we pay the Canadian price. We put in our manure storage, we pay the Canadian price. But what happens when we go to sell it? We take the world for it. So I don't care how smart a business person you are or how many numbers of cattle you got, you just can't make a go of it.

If you look at all that we sell, the cow-calf operation is probably the slowest to get a good return but it's the slowest to lose a lot of money where the beef industry you can be up or down in the feedlots. You can make it fairly quick but you can also lose it fairly quick. I remember when I was back farming, you might have a couple bad years but the beef prices were up 10 or 20 cents a pound. Then all of a sudden she's just tearing around and it was just a goal going out. Those are the days in the 1980s and the 1990s and I know during the 1970s, the 1980s and 1990s the beef industry was in good shape. But if you go out west, and I've been there and I do talk to (Indistinct) farmers out there, or you get the magazine, there's farm after farm for sale.

I was talking to my brother the other day, Brian. Brian, I said, why do you bother with feeding these cows? Your wife's a teacher, and according to the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, your land's worth millions. So I said: Why would you want to farm? He said to me: I'm a hobby farmer. That's what he told me. He said: I got to have something to do. He wants a farm because he grew up being a farmer. But he's an insurance adjuster himself. So he's got two off-farm incomes.

If you look at that story, he wants to farm because he enjoys it and he like the cattle and he was brought up in that area. That's why he's doing it. He said: That's my hobby. I might as well be doing that as working out at the gym. So if you look at it that way, he has a hobby. But look at the salaries he's got coming in.

Or if you go to the Easter beef show in there, I forget what they raised but it was one awful pile of money for Easter Seals. I said to Brian and my nephew, Kirk Duncan: My land, you farmers must have a lot of money to put that much money in. Anyway, Brian looked at me and Kirk, and Brian

wasn't very long, he said: You know, actually, how many farmers that didn't have their wife working and them working on the farm too? When you look through it. He started going on. Kirk and his wife are both teachers. Brian is an insurance adjuster. His wife's a teacher. Another farmer that was in there I believe has a farm machinery business, and I could go on and on. When you look at it, some of the farmers who are showing cattle in there are butchers. So they all had this other income.

But if PEI is going to stay in the cattle business we're going to have to make up our minds. We either got to beef in to our institutions across Atlantic Canada or you just can't keep it going. I don't know how you're going to do it. You can have all the money you want. We put in about 30 million or something in that beef plant up there, and that's good, but the thing is, you got to have an end product. I sat in on one of those meetings and basically they can make money there provided they don't have to pay too much for the cattle.

Ms. Dunsford: Call the hour.

Mr. MacKinley: The hour's been called.

Speaker: Hon. members, the hour has been called.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that this House adjourn until tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good evening.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at 10:00 a.m.

