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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Speaker: Hon. Kathleen M. Casey

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I consider it a privilege to rise on behalf of the Premier today and welcome everyone in the gallery.

There are some familiar faces, and there are some really familiar faces in the gallery for me. I'd like to introduce my wife, Wendy Webster, in the gallery. She joined us today, which is a pleasure. Besides her is a dear friend of our family, Judy Lewis, who is from Bedeque. Judy has decided to pop in here as well today, so we're really pleased to have them here.

This past week was the first day of lobster season. The numbers are coming in. Catches are fairly good. Prices are slightly better than last year so we're really excited about that. Also, the farmers are, in ever greater numbers, going out on the land these days. We wish them well. Great yields and profitability for the upcoming year.

I'd like to welcome everyone out there on EastLink, and hope they enjoy the proceedings today. Enjoy this beautiful day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to rise and welcome everybody into the gallery, our regular guests, as well as

April Ennis and Jane Boyd who are with us today. I'd also like to say what a great Monday we've had this week. Many of us participated and watched the young people in Music Monday. It was a terrific event held here at Trinity United Church.

I'd also like to say hello to Florence and Stirling Pickett, from my district. I didn't realize, until Sunday, they watch faithfully every day. So I'd like to say hello to them.

I, too, would like to wish everybody that's on the land and the sea this week a very good safe week.

Thank you.

An Hon. Member: 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. A special welcome to everyone at home watching from the wonderful District of Evangeline-Miscouche. I'd also like to thank and congratulate the organizing committee on a very successful fundraiser we had in aid to rebuild the Evangeline rec centre over the weekend.

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'd like to get up and welcome everybody to the gallery today. How are you, Wendy?

It's a great day, and although all the fishers

are not out today, the catches have been very good. I noticed a lot of oyster fishers on the water today on my way in as well. So everybody's working hard, and hopefully the catches will continue to be as good as they have been in the first few days. They're excellent. The price, hopefully, will match the value of our product.

Today, I would like to also, while I'm standing, wish my mother a happy birthday. It was just a belated birthday. She had a birthday yesterday. Minister Campbell's mother was receiving her first cheque. Let's just say my mother has received them for 10 years now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LeClair: Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to acknowledge and welcome everybody to the gallery today, especially Wendy Webster, who is with us this afternoon. As well, I, too, would like to congratulate all the students that participated in Music Monday. They did a super job. Especially I'd like to congratulate the students from both Sherwood and Stonepark schools.

As well, I'd like to say hello to all residents from Sherwood, but especially to Parker and Theresa Baker, who have both been feeling a little under the weather lately, so I do wish them well today. I'd also like to wish a belated happy birthday to Celia MacDowall, a resident of Atlantic Baptist Nursing Home. On Sunday she had her 90th birthday, and I'm told she had a great celebration with her family and friends out in the Winsloe area, and a great time had by all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to, first of all, welcome our visitors, Mrs. Webster and Eddie Lund, to the gallery today. It's always a pleasure to have visitors up there and send greetings out.

I also want to recognize the great catches we had at our ports in Bideford and Lennox Island over the weekend. Yesterday the fishers all had safe returns to port, which is always a blessing. Our oyster fishers out at Grand River, it's packed at the bridge there, but thanks to our fisheries minister there, we've got a great parking lot and they're off the road. I appreciate that, and I know they do too.

I'd like to send out sympathy to Bertie Thompson of Belmont in the passing of her sister. I just want to let Ethel Ellis and Mae MacNeil know that we're thinking of them and their challenge with their health these days. It's always hard for families to go through that, but we are thinking of them and I certainly wish them the best. And send greetings out to everyone that's watching today.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Ms. Dunsford: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to say hello to everyone watching on EastLink in the beautiful and growing District of Stratford-Kinlock, especially to Alan Holman who lives at Andrews of Stratford, celebrating his 95th birthday this month. Fantastic.

Also like to welcome Jane Boyd and April Ennis in the gallery, both of whom lend a very valuable perspective to early childhood learning. Thanks for being here today. I hope you enjoy the proceedings.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

It's a pleasure, as well, to rise and welcome everyone in the public gallery joining us here today. A special hello to Wendy Webster up there.

Also, a good friend of mine - a neighbour and constituent - Patrick Power is joining us today. Patrick and his wife Karen and their daughters Gillian and Mary-Beth live just across the road from me in Souris River, so it's good to see Patrick here.

I, too, would like to wish all the fishermen well. I had the opportunity to get out myself on Saturday with a good friend of mine. We had good weather and good catches on both sides of the Island, which is great to see. Now, we hope that we get a good return with a good price for our lobsters as well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to wish everybody welcome in the gallery, Eddie Lund and Wendy Webster and everybody that's there today. I'd also like to send congratulations out to Sheldon Cudmore, who won a silver

medal in the Atlantic junior championships in Halifax.

Of course, I'd be remiss not to give our best wishes to our farming community and our fishers, especially in light of it's not an easy life in terms of our neighbouring province that has lost a fisher over the weekend. I'm sure the hearts and minds of our fishers are thinking about the tragedy that's unfolding down south and the environmental aspects of a large fishery in our southern hemisphere there. I wish our fishers well and hope they have a very prosperous season.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to rise today and welcome those to the gallery. Hello to Wendy, and I believe Barry Taylor's with us today, and Eddie Lund.

I, also, had the opportunity to attend Music Monday. It was a great performance. The children did a great job and I'm sure the teachers and parents are very proud of them, as they should be.

I'd also like to say hello to some people that are home watching today on EastLink. To Heath and Verna Craswell, who watch every day, I'd like to say hello to them. To Harold and Norma Morrow, they are celebrating their 59th wedding anniversary. Or they have celebrated it. At first, when I heard, I thought it might have been Norma's 59th birthday, but no, it's her 59th wedding anniversary. I hope they enjoy the proceedings today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Sherry: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to rise today and welcome everyone to our gallery this afternoon, especially Wendy Webster and her friend Judy. I'd also like to say that it's always a pleasure - I would like to go a little further than my seat mate in saying that for anybody that doesn't know Wendy, it's always an extreme pleasure to converse and spend time with Wendy. She's one of those people who is an eternal optimist and always a breath of fresh air.

I'd also like to say hello to everyone in my constituency in Summerside-Wilmot, especially to my mother Roma, who will be watching today. A wonderful lady who does a lot of caregiving with my mom, Rena Gaudet. She's an exceptional individual, and without her to help us out it would be a very difficult path. I wanted to give her recognition today. Also, to Aunt Thelma, who is still in hospital recuperating and spending her time every day critiquing what goes on in the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, I, too, want to welcome those to the gallery, especially a constituent of mine up there, Harvey Collicutt. Great to see you down here Harvey. I guess you're obviously missing your two cohorts there, Erwin Phillips and Shelton Barlow. I suppose Shelton's out at the scallops probably today.

Anyway, Harvey's also been involved a lot with the West Point Development Corporation. We've got a big project going on out there at West Point in renovating the inn and the restaurant there. I know Harvey's put a lot of long hours into making that project a success and we wish him well here today.

Thanks, Harvey.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to rise and welcome all those in the gallery there, especially the hon. minister of agriculture's wife, Wendy. I'd also like to welcome constituents in Alberton-Roseville that may be watching via EastLink. I say a special hello to Freddie Raddie who I know watches us faithfully every day.

I'd also like to mention I had the privilege of attending an announcement in Alberton-Roseville this morning - Bloomfield - where the government announced the opening of a new call centre up in the district. We're very pleased to have that there. A very good announcement and job well done.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park.

Hillsborough Promoters

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Getting together and cleaning up the community for the betterment of its image is definitely worthwhile to the Hillsborough Promoters. The Hillsborough Promoters is a non-profit organization who recently organized a cleanup and barbeque in the community. The event was supported by the organization's youth group, the Hillsborough Helping Hands.

Hillsborough Promoters' main goal is to build relationships between people. They want community members to feel like they are part of their community, and they wish to make Hillsborough a better community.

Madam Speaker, and fellow Members, the Hillsborough Promoters are changing the negative perception of Hillsborough through many changes made to the community over the years. There are now gorgeous parks and kilometres of walking trails. They want people to understand that Hillsborough is a great neighbourhood and Hillsborough Promoters are continually working to make it an even better place for residents.

The Hillsborough Promoters were recently recognized by local officials for their efforts. Their hard work is certainly not going unnoticed.

In closing, I would like us to take the opportunity to thank the Hillsborough Promoters for their commitment in making their community a better place for its residents.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Recognition of Nabuurs family

Mr. Dumville: Thank you very much,

Madam Speaker.

If I might have your indulgence, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the Nabuurs family of Winsloe that were recently named the MS Family of the Year. On April 26th a flag-raising ceremony was held at the Montague fire hall honouring Cathy and Mike. Mike was originally from Montague, but they now call the great district of West Royalty-Springvale home. In 2001 Cathy was diagnosed with MS.

For those who may not know, MS is a neurological disease with no cure and affects vision, hearing, memory, balance and mobility. The MS had progressed to a point that her job as a speech language pathologist was affected and she could no longer handle the caseload.

In 2006 Cathy was told her disease had progressed to a more aggressive form. She was approached the same year by Dr. Mark Freedman and asked if she would participate in an experimental study. Cathy agreed and, along with Mike, made the decision to move her family to Ottawa for a year while undergoing this treatment.

It has been three years since Ms. Nabuurs has received her treatment and she hasn't had an MS attack since. In her own words: It's given us a second chance. We couldn't have done this without the doctors, nurses, friends, and family. You need good health, but you also need your friends and family.

Since then she has been able to return to work part-time, assisting grade 1 students, and has a new lease on life.

From May 6th to the 8th, representatives of the MS Society of Canada will be selling carnations to raise funds for programs and awareness of MS. This disease affects over 300 Islanders and their families. When you see someone selling carnations, please

support them so they can continue their efforts to help families like Mike and Cathy Nabuurs.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Recognizing April Ennis and Jane Boyd

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is my pleasure to rise and recognize the hard work of Jane Boyd and April Ennis. These two women are dedicated advocates of the family, particularly in the area of autism spectrum disorder and its research.

Jane Boyd is the founder and president of Work, Family & Life consulting. WFL specializes in the design, development and delivery of progressive work-life solutions that address the issues faced by today's work environments. Jane is actively involved in the issues that she is so passionate about. She has served on the Provincial Child Care Council in British Columbia and the WorkLife British Columbia Advisory Committee as well as countless other committee and task force appointments. She's been active in her field for over 20 years. She has quite a bit of experience in the area of child care programs and has worked with organizations, governments, and individuals. She also resided on Prince Edward Island for several years before - she now lives back in British Columbia but still works (Indistinct).

April Ennis is a mother, educator, and autism advocate. She has been involved in autism awareness since her eldest boy, Brandon, was diagnosed in 2005. April

knows first hand the struggles of Island mothers of autistic children, what they face on a daily basis. Her enthusiasm for life, her will to help make people have supports and programs, makes her an outstanding advocate. April blogs regularly about autism and its treatments.

I'm proud to acknowledge the work of both of these women. Their dedication to families and youth on Prince Edward Island is very admirable. April and Jane do a great job of holding government accountable and their commitment inspires all Islanders, especially the families and the children that receive their great work.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

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

High-speed Internet

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

A question for the minister of innovation. It's about five months now passed when the deadline was made by Aliant when they made a commitment with government and yourself that all the installations were completed and everybody was hooked up. Certainly, we've been at some public meetings since then that clearly indicates that not everybody was hooked up.

Can you tell us today how many people are not hooked up to high-speed Internet on Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation

and Advanced Learning.

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

I believe when we started working - when Aliant started with the rural broadband project there were 23,000 homes that did not have high-speed Internet access here on Prince Edward Island. To my knowledge virtually most, if not all, of those homes, now have access to high-speed. There may be a few isolated areas that are still being hooked up.

Very good indication about the value of rural broadband this morning at an announcement in Bloomfield. I believe under the previous administration they opened a call centre in that area back in 2002 or 2003. What seemed to be one of the downfalls of that company was lack of access to high-speed Internet. Well, you know, now it's great that Bloomfield and every other part of Prince Edward Island now has access to high-speed Internet.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Question for the minister of innovation. Minister, in this one Island, one community that you guys promote all the time in regards to helping - everybody is the same and treated equally - can you tell me today why the people in rural PEI that have a turbo stick have to pay 49.95 and everybody else pays 29.95? Do you think that's fair?

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

Mr. Campbell: Thank you very much.

It's a good question from the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters. I actually spoke with a constituent of mine who had a

similar question just about a week ago. I did some checking on that. There are different prices and those prices are with respect to bundling of services. It's my understanding that the turbo stick price is comparable. Actually, as of January of this year the DSL cost at Aliant was raised, I believe, \$2.00 while the turbo stick price remained the same. So actually, under a comparable package, I believe the turbo stick is cheaper.

Thank you.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, that's not the case.

People in rural PEI that are hooked up to the turbo stick have to pay 49.95 and those that are hooked up to the DSL pay 29.95. So minister, I'm asking: Do you think that is fair to rural PEI?

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

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I guess if the service or the bundling package was identical - and that was indeed the case - I certainly wouldn't think it was fair. But it's my understanding that on a comparable package the turbo stick in rural PEI is actually cheaper than the DSL.

Thank you.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, now that the turbo sticks have been installed in some homes they're starting to receive their invoices and some of the invoices now, instead of 49.95, they're \$421.95.

On that bill - and we have copies here - some of them are showing almost \$40.00 in provincial sales tax. So this is really causing a lot of concern out there, minister, in regards to the customers who are spending hours on the phones trying to straighten this out. They're getting calls from the credit companies indicating they want their credit card right away, when it was committed by your government and Aliant, 49.95.

Will you see to it that this is straightened out?

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

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

It has been brought to my attention that there has been some discrepancies with respect to billing. I know that Bell Aliant is acutely aware of that. I will make a commitment to the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters that I will follow up with Aliant later this afternoon to make sure that those discrepancies are corrected.

Thank you.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, we've been asking for quite awhile now for a copy of the development agreement, and I think Bruce Howatt from Aliant said that he does have one and there (Indistinct) a development agreement.

So I'm wondering, minister, in any way, shape or form, is your government subsidizing the difference between some of these bills that are coming in and the 49.95? Are you guys writing that off for Aliant, the difference in these bills?

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

Mr. Campbell: Absolutely not, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, we have an untendered - an account for \$8 million that was given to Aliant and we've seen a number of times that they've missed their deadline.

We have poor service, a lot of people in rural PEI have to pay a great deal more than anybody else, and now we have a recall on the turbo sticks. Are you aware of the recall yesterday?

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

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

I had a call from a business, actually in my constituency, last evening, with respect to a malfunction of the turbo stick. I've sent a request to Bell Aliant for some information regarding that and I'm still waiting on a response from Bell Aliant.

Thank you.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Apparently, Madam Speaker, this recall is in effect of the safety of customers in their homes.

So I'm wondering, minister, have you called the fire marshal regarding this potential hazard?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation

and Advanced Learning.

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

The call I received from the business owner in my constituency last evening didn't indicate it was a safety issue. He said simply that he wasn't able to access high-speed Internet. I did tell him that, of course, under this administration we now have high-speed Internet access, as opposed to the previous administration who in 1997, I believe it was, under the former premier, promised to make PEI Canada's smartest province and bring high-speed Internet access to everyone in the province. We have to flash ahead all the way to 2008 until we finally had a government that delivered on a promise.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Maybe the minister would bring in a copy of the development agreement. Because at least then Islanders could see if there are any penalty clauses to Aliant for not providing a good service and overcharging his customers. I'd also like to see if there was anything in there regarding subsidizing them when they're putting in bills like this to our Island customers.

So will you table the development agreement between the government of PEI and Aliant on high-speed Internet?

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

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

I believe there is a request that's been forwarded through the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* with respect to the development agreement. I'm not sure if the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters is part of that request or not. The request is in and I'm letting that process take place.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Personal Health Number (PHN) concerns

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Islanders are very concerned about the privacy of their health information, especially in the light of the transfer of authority from Health PEI from the department.

My first question is to the minister of health. Every Islander has a Personal Health Number or a PHN. The Auditor General noted that there could be as many as 10,000 more PHNs in the system than the population of PEI. My question to the minister: What process is in place to verify and ensure that ineligible people are not receiving service?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Auditor General in this year's Auditor General's report did look at our Clinical Information System and our health record system. There has been recommendations that have been made. There have been - and our department regards the auditor's comments as constructive and well received, and we are working with those

recommendations, and we value this document as a template for where we go forward.

But I certainly want to reiterate to the Leader of the Opposition that safety of patient records is paramount in our system, and we work as hard as we can as a system to deliver safe records and the effectiveness of those records within our one Island health care system.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In 2009 the Auditor General had identified that there was 10,000 more PHNs than actually the number of people in the population of PEI. The question to the minister is: How did 10,000 more PHN numbers get issued?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Auditor General did bring up the issue around the medical cards, the PEI health cards, and we do note that there are extra cards within our system. Work is being done to make sure that we are effective in terms of the - versus our population. We have taken the recommendations of the Auditor General to heart and we're working on that, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the health minister again. We know that the Auditor General is really concerned with this issue and so are Islanders. The question is: How did it happen in the first place?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Systems change, and we are moving towards a new integrated information system within our health care provisions. If you look at the pharmacies right now within our system and the accessibility to patient records, obviously safety is paramount. But we are providing the best access to clinical information to health providers in our province.

But again, I'm not dismissing that the Auditor General made recommendations to the department. But we are acting on that and we are bringing in line the amount of cards that are out within our system to match the amount of population that is warranted to have those medical cards.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the same minister. Madam Minister, what checks and balances are in place to ensure that people - if they may pass away, if they leave out of the province - that their PHN is actually taken out of the system?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I can bring back to the Legislature more information in that regard, but we do have vital statistics

that is part of the department of health and Health PEI.

That information, obviously, is used when people either are born in our province or do pass away, that is all taken into the system.

But again, I'm saying that we are working on the recommendations that the Auditor has presented, but any further information of clarity, I will bring back to the Legislature.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is a very serious issue, and my question is the fact the Auditor General raised it in 2009 - 10,000 is a huge number. It's not five, it's not 20. It's 10,000. The question is: Was the issue caused because people were just left in the system or was someone intentionally trying to duplicate these cards?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I don't think there's anywhere within the auditor's report of 2009 that there was any means within the department that there was duplication trying to occur.

I believe we are working on the recommendations. I reiterate that. We are using statistics that are available to the department to ensure that those PEI health care cards that are out in the system match, again, those residents that are in the province who have a health card or should have a health card, and that we use statistics, whether they're vital statistics, of births or deaths, Madam Speaker, to ensure that we have the population that matches the amount of cards.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the health minister, would any of the PHN cards still be used perhaps if a person had lived on the Island two or three years and they've moved away from here for three or four years? Would they still be active and are they still billing the province?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I think our front line and our department staff do an excellent job in terms of looking into our system, in terms of those people that have either left our system or are currently in our system that are billing the health care for costs.

But again, I am not dismissing that the recommendation's from the auditor - we're taking those in terms of the department across the board. But I think it's important to note that we do have a Clinical Information System in the province. We are moving towards more integrated health care records in the province. It's only going to dictate more in terms of credibility, our numbers, information that's available to the system, and can only ensure safety into the future for patient records.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

CERNER health information system

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's extremely important for checks and balances in this system, especially with the PHN card. But we'll move into the

CERNER health information system.

Question to the health minister. Would it be possible for an individual patient to have their health file information mixed up with another person?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Right now we have, through the Clinical Information System, 23 of our 25 systems up and running. That is delivering better health care, better accessibility to patient records in the province. I have to certainly say, as minister of health, I'm very pleased at the progress that has been made on this front from this government.

When we came to government in 2007 this project was falling by the wayside. That is a very true statement, and the auditor has brought that forward, if you look at the timelines in the new auditor's report.

We addressed that. We had a specialist come in to look at where we stood in terms of our Clinical Information System with our electronic health records and very pleased with the - again, I'll use the words of the Leader of the Opposition - the checks and balances that were presented to government. Where we needed to go, where we had to invest.

It's interesting also to note that the previous administration - if you look at the history of this program - when they took away the IT services within departments, this led to this program falling by the wayside. So we had valuable people, resources, individuals working within departments on the information technology side that were taken out of the system back in 2005. That was one of the primary reasons this project went off the rails.

So our government took heed of that. We invested the resources and I'm pleased to say that we have seen improvement, we are demonstrating improvement and we have great work that has happened now and past.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Actually, being in government is about what you do for the people today. My question to the health minister is: In regards to the CERNER health system, the information system, would it be possible for an individual patient to have their personal health information mixed up with another patient? Would that be possible?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, that's a hypothetical question.

I'm hoping that we're ensuring the safety of patient records within this system, but I don't know what the Leader of the Opposition is trying to zero in on this particular case, if she's trying to discuss a particular situation. But we value the safety of patient records and the confidentiality around all of that.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the health minister. Are mammogram bookings done inside the CERNER health information system?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think it's important to see the value in this. When the H1N1 crisis happened in this province, if it hadn't been for us having an integrated and a Clinical Information System, our director of medical programs was unable on a daily basis to check in to see what admissions were to any of our acute care facilities. We were able to access that information just on statistics. That was very critical with that particular situation and crisis within our health care system.

You look at our pharmacies across the province. We're not seeing now, because of the information now available to our pharmacists, the over-prescriptions. But again, we have people that are in our system, those that are leading this, that can go in and have the checks and balances to ensure that there is not over-prescribing. Those are very critical things.

We also have other health professionals that are able to access, whether it be diagnostics that are being done at the hospital - those are all critical pieces of information and patients and their diagnoses.

So I value this system, our government values this system and it's where our country is moving - Canada - with the Canada Infoway money. So PEI is leading as a jurisdiction in clinical information systems, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the health minister. Are mammograms bookings done inside the CERNER health system?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and

Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I will have to bring back that information to the Leader of the Opposition. I believe right now that is being taken place outside of the system, but I will have to bring that back to the leader. I think it's important to note, though, that the mammogram and the booking system, we're doing a central booking system with our mammography timing and they're almost doubling the time that screening can take place. So we are making improvements, whether they are coming to the QEH or the PCH for mammography. We're decreasing the wait times for screening for women and that is very important, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the health minister. How would you explain the fact when one Islander went to have a mammogram done, it was discovered her health information was actually mixed up with a different person altogether? How would you explain that?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, I cannot discuss individual cases on the floor of this Legislature, but I value our professionals that are within the system, that are working with this technology, working with the new system.

Our new clinical information system will achieve better patient safety records. I don't know what the Leader of the Opposition - she's trying to talk, obviously, to a specific

case. I cannot speak about specific cases in this Legislature.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's actually about people's - individual's - health privacy records. How would it happen, when a person goes to have a mammogram, that their record is not their record at all but somebody else's? Could the minister please explain how that would happen?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition's case that she's discussing, again, I do not want to speak about individual cases on the floor of this Legislature.

If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to speak to that individual, I will follow through to ensure that the proper officials deal with the individual case, but I'm not going to discuss it on the floor of this Legislature for confidentiality purposes.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, we're speaking about people's private health information here. How would this happen, and is this one isolated case, or has it happened maybe 10, 20 times? Can the minister explain this?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, the Clinical Information System is going to ensure better safety for patient records. Also, it's going to ensure better delivery of service. If you look at referral forms today, where it's a paper form, it could be - in terms of writing - professionals can't understand that other professional's handwriting, or perhaps it's the patient too. So it's going to be more effective in terms of the delivery of patient records and diagnoses.

The Leader of the Opposition, I will bring back any information I can, relative to statistics if she wishes, but I'm not going to discuss individual cases on the floor of the Legislature.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Minister, I'll go back to you again. This is about people's health information. It's really important that it's kept private.

Do you understand how serious this is? If a person goes in to have a test done and someone else's health information's there, what would happen if a doctor, instead of a mammogram, it was actually in the area of surgery? Do you understand how serious this problem is?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, as Minister of Health and Wellness, I am not dismissing the seriousness of the allegations or the line of questioning that the Leader of the Opposition is posing here today.

All I am saying to her is if there is an individual in question here that she contact that individual and that we will follow up.

Any statistics that I can bring back to the Legislature, I will. But as minister, I don't dismiss serious allegations in that respect, but I think it's important to know how the information system is changing. I was in Alberton hospital the other day, and it's just amazing how things are changing, how diagnostic testing is being done, and if that patient has to be transferred to the Prince County Hospital, that information is delivered within seconds to that patient going to the PCH.

We're working as an integrated health system, but again, the Leader of the Opposition, I don't dismiss what her question is - her allegations - but I certainly would urge her to contact that individual. We'll put her in line with our department and Health PEI, but I treat it as a serious nature.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This particular individual, this happened well over a year ago. The patient had a mammogram appointment, discovered that her information wasn't accurate. She spent two hours at the QEH with staff to try and come up with a solution to the problem. Guess what? This year she goes back to have another test done and the health information is mixed up again.

Can the minister please tell us what's going on?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Again, Madam Speaker, so it's an individual case.

I do not dismiss that this is serious, and again I implore the Leader of the Opposition to have that individual contact our department. She can call or he can call the department, our office. We will certainly put that individual in contact with the appropriate authorities that will look into this, because I do treat it as a serious nature, the level of this questioning.

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

Energy issues

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry. In the fall a 2009 legislative standing committee recommended a review of the *Electric Power Act* so power generators and distributors could implement time-of-day-billing, and encourage local sustainable energy generation that better reflects today's energy realities. Will the minister inform the House of the status of this recommendation within his department?

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

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To inform the House, we are out negotiating with several provinces right now - Newfoundland and Quebec - in order to get a power purchase agreement for Prince Edward Island. We're hoping that if we get a power purchase agreement out of one of these provinces - or New Brunswick, now that the deal has gone by the wayside.

One of the options is time of day billing, and that's billing when you can do your laundry or certain things at night time at a cheaper rate. Ontario has a time of day billing. I

think it's four cents at nighttime and it's around eight cents during the day. So there are economics there.

We're working towards that. We're waiting for some sort of a power purchase agreement out of one of our sister provinces - and work with our sister provinces in order to do this on a Maritime-wide basis. I think the savings can be there and the energy efficiency can be there also, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Henderson: Supplementary to the same minister.

When can we expect this act to be amended, and would amending this act provide options for lower electric rates?

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

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to inform the House there are several studies going on right now. I have to thank the Member from Montague-Kilmuir's old buddy Stephen Harper - his birthday buddy - that certain monies have been made available through the ACOA project and through the natural resources. Two reports are being done. We're working with our sister provinces in terms of a smart grid, where we hook all the grids together. These grids would work on an integrated basis and the best energy would be drawn from the system and delivered to the customers at that time.

We're also working with our sister provinces right now, through another ACOA initiative, in order to see if we can get together on both the transmission system for Atlantic Canada into the Quebec province

and into the US. These two initiatives are underway and we're awaiting those reports to come back and to see what we can do in terms of that.

I can't emphasize enough that we are too small of a province, we're too small of a utility, to do some of these big things. But if we cooperate together, and our sister provinces in Atlantic Canada, I think great things can happen. I'm out there encouraging cooperation between the three utilities, or four utilities, or five utilities. We've been basically put on notice from the US. There is a tremendous amount of energy purchases down there. The Americans have basically told us that: If you don't get your act together our cable will go out west. We're working in order for a Maritime-Quebec-Nalcor grid here. If we can do that, it's only going to mean lower rates for Islanders and lower rates for Canadians.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Tire recycling contract and Treasury Board procedures

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Minister, there is a contract that Dawson Tire Recycling has with Island Waste Management Corporation with respect to recycling tires. Can you tell the House whether proper Treasury Board procedure was followed when this contract was awarded?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Before I started, I was talking to some people up in Alberton the

other day and there are six full-time jobs there and four part-time that didn't cost the province any money. We made money on the deal.

All right. Dawson's was the low bidder for the RFP, for the stockpile of tires. The only bidder from PEI for the whole amount of tires. But they were passed over because they could not meet the necessary schedule of getting - I'll just call it the Tory tires out of here - the loose tires. So when Dawson's was unsuccessful, their low bid on the stockpiles, they discussed taking this approach to the loose tire contract, which we had going at the same time.

It's hard to quite understand this, because we had hundreds of thousands of Tory tires leaving - all muddy and dirty - that we had to dig up and we had to ship to Quebec. Then we also had on this side, the tires on a regular basis to be picked up at our service stations and that.

Solution A, they were still going to Quebec. Solution B, Quebec was getting the B, and it created no jobs here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

In terms of following procedure, Treasury Board policy directs that departments or agencies consult with the secretary to Treasury Board for clarification or interpretation. In this case the secretary was consulted and the proper procedures were advised to take. He advised IWMC to prepare a memo to Treasury Board, to submit it to Treasury Board for approval, and this would constitute proper procedures.

I don't know how much clearer I have to be on this.

So, as it goes, as directed by the secretary, the CEO prepared that Treasury Board submissions, noting all the facts. Island Waste Watch board, which favoured this -

made it a PEI solution, after considering TB approval, and awarded Dawson's tire with the contract that the tires are being processed here in the province. We're saving money compared to going to Quebec, and they were advertised. It was just no Island firm bid on it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Supplementary, Madam Speaker, for the same minister.

Mr. Minister, how long is that contract for?

Mr. M. Currie: Six years.

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

Mr. MacKinley: So, I think - we just want to make sure - everybody understands - Treasury Board policy was followed. I can't get much clearer than that. The contract is for six years.

Mr. Brown: How'd you know, Mike?

Mr. MacKinley: The contract, because I gave him a copy of the contract the other day. The contract is for six years, and in the Alberton-Roseville area it created six jobs plus four part-time jobs.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. MacKinley: Mind you, we saved money when we did that.

Thank you very much

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Protection of health information

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We're speaking about a very serious issue here in terms of health records. My question to the health minister - and don't forget, we already know that there's over 10,000 PHN cards in the system that shouldn't be there. My question is: Now that we know that these health records are being mixed up, would the minister please assure the public that their health information's actually being protected?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have certainly value for our front line professionals delivering health care in this province, and I put utmost faith in our system in regards to patient safety, and the records of an electronic medical records and all medical records in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

But again, if there is something in question that the Leader of the Opposition would like our department or Health PEI to look into, we will. I implore the Leader of the Opposition to tell that individual to contact our department or Health PEI.

I certainly have faith in our system, I have faith in our front line professionals that are delivering service from day to day in our system. But I think if, just to talk about breast screening programs in the province, we are moving towards better service for women in this province in terms of

mammography and screen. You look at the supports that our foundations have given and the government has given to the QEH and the PCH over the last couple of years. It's been very valuable. We're reducing the wait times.

As I've already said to the Leader of the Opposition, we have implemented a central system for bookings for mammography in the province, and this has greatly improved the reduction in wait times for women across the province getting mammography services.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the health minister. Would there be perhaps a major flaw in the system?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I am - again, my faith is in the system, and in the protection of medical records in the province whether they be in electronic version, which some of them are, and some of them are paper versions.

We protect patients' records. Again, I implore the Leader of the Opposition, if there's an individual case that she bring - or tell that individual to come forward to our authorities within our department.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the health minister: Wouldn't you be concerned when there's 10,000 extra PHN cards? This is one example of health information being mixed up. Wouldn't you want to go back and check in your department just how many times this happens, Madam Minister?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't think I've denied that all along in this line of questioning. I've said that I will take back any statistics that I can give in regards to the health care cards of Islanders. Also, in regards to this particular case that she is talking about, I again ask her to speak with that individual and come forward to the authorities. Because I am standing here today as the minister of health in this province to ensure, and reassure, Islanders that we are protecting the records of Islanders, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Integrated Claims Service system

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Auditor General raised the issue of the 10,000 PHN cards in 2009.

The next question to the health minister. Besides the issues identified in CERNER, the Auditor General raised concerns over the Integrated Claims Services system, or ICS. To the minister, for any employee who has ICS access on their computer, when they log in to their health system, it automatically goes here. There's no separate login for this confidential system. My question to the minister: What have you done to fix this problem?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

If the Leader of the Opposition is speaking about the drug system, in terms of the accessibility, again, I reiterate, like I said at the very beginning of this line of questioning, that we treat the auditor's reports as constructive to our department. We are working with them with those recommendations to ensure better efficiencies with our system, and that statistics are used to better ensure and have timeliness in terms of service delivery in the province.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, that's not what Integrated Claims System is.

The Integrated Claims System is payment information and addresses and personal information to physicians, as well as personal health information of PEI residents. Do you understand where the problem is? Madam Minister, can you explain why you didn't even know that that system, what it's function is?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, I bring back to the drug health system. There were certain - and I'm going to speak to that because in the auditor's report Mr. Younker did have recommendations around the drug system, and protection in terms of passwords and things like that.

But in terms of the claimants and the claims

that come forward through the department, hon. member, we certainly are working with the recommendations brought forward from the auditor, and we are trying to even better our - the efficiencies within the health care system on PEI.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Minister, to the health minister, any employee who has working in health that has access, when they log on, they'll automatically go to the ICS system, the Integrated Claims System.

My question to you is: The Auditor General clearly states that this is a major issue because of people's confidentiality. What are you doing to fix it?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, I think it's important to note that the department has contracted the Hay Group and that we are looking at all claims that are coming through the province and services with physicians. We are looking to ensure that there isn't over-billing happening in the province, to ensure that we have efficiencies and that health care is operated in the most efficient manner possible.

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

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is really about people's personal privacy and health information. The Auditor General, and I quote from the 2009 report, 4.73: "For each user who has ICS on his or her computer, when login to the Health

Network is completed, access is automatic to the ICS." Simply, when the person signs in it poses a "greater risk for compromise of confidential information."

Madam Minister, this information is highly sensitive. Why are you ignoring the Auditor General's recommendation for you to fix it?

An Hon. Member: We're not. We're not ignoring it.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) didn't even know what it was about.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We are certainly not ignoring the auditor's recommendations to the province, to the department. Again, I reiterate that patient records are critically important to remain safe in the hands of our health care professionals.

But it's important to note our electronic medical records, our electronic health records, where we're moving with the Clinical Information System in this province, is only going to prove and serve Islanders better, serve our medical professionals better, in timeliness, in appropriate diagnosis, with valuable information at their fingertips. Our government, I'm pleased to tell today, we've invested - since 2007 we came into government - to see that the Clinical Information System, that the Canada Health Infoway money was better accessed, and that we are fulfilling our obligation as a jurisdiction within Canada to ensure that patient safety and that health records become electronic form before 2016.

We have that obligation as a jurisdiction within our country, and we are working hard

to deliver on that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. Members, before I move on to Statements by Ministers, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale mentioned in his statements earlier about a constituent who won a gold medal at the recent judo championships in Halifax.

I also want to let you know that one of our Pages, Dunja, from Colonel Gray High School, is also a gold medalist in the same judo club.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

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

Virtual Agent Services

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This morning I had the pleasure of travelling to Bloomfield with my colleagues the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness and the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, to attend the official announcement of a contact centre opening with 50 new jobs in the heart of West Prince.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Campbell: These jobs are being brought to Bloomfield by Virtual Agent Services. This is a company that has made a pattern of locating and succeeding in small communities. Last year, Virtual Agent Services opened an operation in Bedeque and that office continues to thrive and to grow. I'm confident that we can expect the

same kind of success and growth from the new Bloomfield location.

I'm sure my colleagues will agree that this is not just good news for Bloomfield, but good news for all of West Prince and for Prince Edward Island. This is good news for the whole IT sector on Prince Edward Island.

If you'll permit me, I'd just like to say that this announcement shows the result of some of the strategic planning that this government has been carrying out.

Our Island Prosperity Strategy identified the information technology sector as a strategic area of focus where the Island could create jobs and new economic growth. Then we followed up that strategy with the Rural Action Plan which recognized that an Island-wide rural broadband network was needed in order to make sure that the entire Island community could participate in the emerging IT sector. Today we are seeing those two plans coming together.

The announcement today sees year-round jobs in rural PEI. Jobs that depend on the kind of rural broadband Internet access that this government has delivered. This announcement takes one of our greatest strengths - our hardworking, well educated Island workforce - and it builds on that strength. Using our Internet access and our commitment to IT, this announcement puts the jobs where the people are.

This government is committed to the development of every part of Prince Edward Island, rural and urban alike. This government is committed to making sure that Prince Edward Island is a full participant and a successful driving participant in the global information economy.

Today's announcement would not have happened without the tireless efforts of our

staff at Innovation PEI who work so hard to bring jobs and employers to the Island community. It would not have happened without government's commitment to information technology and to the prosperity of every part of this province. This is a great announcement. But with the hard work of our staff and the vision of this government, there will be many more good announcements in the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Assistance for Islanders Needing Organ Transplants

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to announce a new policy initiative as part of Budget 2010. Today we are launching a new reimbursement policy and support for Islanders requiring financial assistance for medical travel and medical accommodation. Our department has been working on this new initiative for several months and we are pleased that through our budget process we are able to provide this necessary support.

Our new policy will be offering financial assistance to Islanders who will be required to live off-Island to receive transplant surgery. With this new initiative, our government will be offering support to eligible transplant patients for medications, accommodations and travel. Our policy is a strategic investment to assist transplant patients through this challenging time in our lives and the lives of their families. Eligible patients scheduled for heart, heart-lung, lung - single or double, liver or non-beta-cell pancreas transplant surgery, will benefit from this initiative.

In addition to this new policy our government has a transplant drug program which provides specific medications to individuals receiving a bone marrow or solid organ transplant. Through this new grant and our existing programs, our government is committing an estimated \$520,000 to transplant patient support.

Having an organ transplant is a major medical procedure and we as government want to ease the financial burden of Islanders who will be required to leave the Maritimes to undergo this surgery. Through this new policy, eligible transplant patients will have access to \$1,000 per month for accommodation subsidy, as well as up to \$1,500 a month every six months for travel to or from PEI to the transplant hospital city outside of the Maritime provinces.

This program will be administered by the out-of-province referral services section of Health PEI.

As I've said before, our department is working to meet the health care needs of all Islanders, both for today and for the future. Today's announcement demonstrates that commitment through this new policy initiative addressing the needs of transplant patients on Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Start Date for Kindergarten

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House today about a change in the start date of Island children entering kindergarten this fall.

With both grade 1 students and kindergarten students entering the system for the first

time, it's important to make sure we have the safety of all students in mind when we start the new school year.

This coming September will be unique for elementary schools across the province. To ensure the safety of all students starting school this year, the department, in consultation with school boards and teachers, has set September 9th as the start date for kindergarten classes across the province.

This two-day grace period will allow schools to welcome one new group of students at a time and will make sure that the first day of school runs as smoothly as possible. The first day of school can be exciting and challenging for children, parents and educators. Each year, bus drivers, teachers, principals and staff do a wonderful job to ensure the safe arrival and dismissal of first-time students.

Having both new grades coming in on the same day would increase the chances of someone getting on the wrong bus or getting off at a wrong stop and that is a chance we do not want to take. This delay for the start date for the kindergarten students is for only one year, as this will be the only time this double cohort of students will occur.

Bringing kindergarten into the school system is a massive and historic undertaking for our province. We need to make sure we take every precaution to ensure the safety of all students as the number one priority.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Report Card on Homelessness

Ms. Sherry: Madam Speaker, I would like to take a moment to speak to a report card that was released yesterday on homelessness on Prince Edward Island.

The report card was published by the PEI Community Advisory Committee on the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, an inter-agency committee representing non-profit and public sector agencies that work with the homeless population or those at risk of becoming homeless on PEI.

The PEI report card provides an overview of the current state of homelessness in our province, using indicators that monitor changes in homelessness, housing and income over time.

I would like to thank the advisory committee for their work in putting this report together. This is the first report card for PEI on this and the objective was to profile homelessness and to introduce some of the organizations and programs that are working to reduce the impact of homelessness.

The information will help all levels of government and non-profit organizations as well as shelter and service providers to identify gaps in the system and to develop responsive strategies. After all, the responsibility for responding to the needs of persons at risk of homelessness is a shared responsibility that rests with all three levels of government and the community at large. Our response has to be a collaborative one.

The report card represents an excellent benchmark for future progress and provides a place to move forward from. Our government is also working towards a social prosperity framework which will help government set priorities and direct its work to improving the quality of life for all Islanders. Reducing poverty is key in achieving social prosperity.

The Social Prosperity Task Force is comprised of representatives from all departments because we know that a social prosperity framework needs to be a collaborative approach. The province has also successfully partnered with the Community Advisory Committee to jointly fund several affordable housing projects in Charlottetown, Summerside, Alberton and Souris, and we appreciate their work and look forward to continued partnership in addressing housing needs for Islanders.

In closing, we must continue to work in partnership with organizations and groups in our Island communities to help those who are most vulnerable and in need of support.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

NAOSH Week Launch

Ms. Sherry: Madam Speaker I am pleased to rise today to recognize this week as North American Occupational Safety and Health Week, also known as NAOSH Week.

This week, workplaces and organizations throughout North America unite in an effort to raise awareness about injury prevention. This year's theme for NAOSH Week is: How safe are you? The goal is to focus the attention of employers, employees, partners and the public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home and in our communities. Doing so will reinforce and strengthen our commitment to workplace safety and health by increasing public awareness.

NAOSH Week provides employers and workers with an opportunity to learn from one another by sharing experiences and

expertise in all areas of workplace injury prevention. It reminds both employers and employees about the importance of health and safety programs in the workplace as well as the significant role played by health and safety representatives and committees, whose efforts help build safe work environments and prevents injuries.

I would like to congratulate the Workers Compensation Board for their continued efforts in advancing public understanding about the importance of increased awareness of workplace health and safety. In addition to launching a public awareness campaign, the Workers Compensation Board will be working with Island employers on several prevention initiatives throughout NAOSH Week.

This week continues to be a great opportunity for employers, employees, community partners and government to work together to raise awareness that safety matters as we move closer to our goal of preventing injuries from happening at work, at home and in our communities.

In recognition of NAOSH Week, I would like to encourage all Islanders to take an active role in creating a healthy and safe work environment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

National Mental Health Week

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is the 59th anniversary of National Mental Health Week in Canada. National Mental Health Week provides opportunities to find out more about the importance of

mental health and how to achieve it in our daily lives.

This year's theme is: Building your mental health one support at a time. The theme emphasizes the importance of having support systems in our lives. A solid foundation for mental health starts with positive relationships at work, in our community and with family and friends. The more supports we have, the better we will be able to cope with the challenges that come our way.

If people lack crucial support at a time when they need help, this can contribute to poor mental health and personal suffering for Islanders. Poor mental health can diminish quality of life and take away the ability to be productive. The lack of productivity is hurtful not only for individuals, but it has also a dramatic effect on health care costs and deprives our province of the contributions of many bright and talented people.

With appropriate supports, Islanders can embrace the fact that poor mental health, whether it is the result of chemical imbalance, disease, trauma or exposure to prolonged stress, can be managed and treated. With the right kind of treatment and support delivered in a timely fashion, recovery is possible for everyone, ensuring that all Islanders will have the opportunity to flourish and contribute to the overall success of our One Island Community.

The Department of Health and Wellness, as well as the PEI division of the Canadian Mental Health Association, would like to take this opportunity to invite all members of the House to take part in the Walk for Mental Health scheduled for tomorrow at Confederation Landing Park, beginning at noon. Please come out for this one-hour event and show your support for mental health week.

Two thousand and ten also represented the 50th anniversary of the PEI division of the Canadian Mental Health Association. This outstanding organization made up of many volunteers has much to celebrate. They are dedicated to improving the mental health of Islanders, and throughout this year of celebrations they will be profiling the work they do now and raising awareness about the work that remains to be done.

Another key group of individuals who contribute to the mental health of Islanders is our department's Community Mental Health system. We offer professional assessments, consultation, treatment, crisis intervention, medication, monitoring, outreach and ongoing support for persons with mild to moderate mental health problems.

Services are provided to youth and adults who present with mental issues and referrals are generally accepted from clients and physicians. Our services are both generic and specialized, depending on the needs of the client population.

Together, Canadian Mental Health Association and our Community Mental Health are working together to meet the needs of Islanders who are struggling.

To close, I would like to take a moment and recognize those in the gallery today who are joining us. We have the president of the PEI division of Canadian Mental Health Association, Mr. John Horreht. We have the national president, Gordon Matheson, with us. We also have the executive director of the PEI division, Reid Burke, and we also have a lot of other members of the Canadian Mental Health Association as part of PEI. We thank you for all being with us today and we value all your work that you do across Prince Edward Island. Thank you so much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: These individuals, Madam Speaker, know first-hand how important mental health is for Islanders, and I thank them for all their work that they do to support both individuals and families who are facing these health issues.

Your work is certainly important and valued within our One Island Community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Centenary of Canadian Navy

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am very pleased to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Navy. One hundred years ago, May 4th, 1910, government proclaimed the *Naval Services Act*, creating the Royal Canadian Navy. At that time a naval reserve force and a volunteer force was established. The naval college was set up in Halifax to train officers. Two cruisers were purchased as training ships.

Shortly after, recruitment began on Prince Edward Island. By September 1923, 30 volunteers had enrolled. As recruitment and training requirements increased on PEI the unit moved into the Navy League building on Haviland Street, known today as the Haviland Club. In 1936 it moved to the Simms building on the corner of Kent and Hillsborough streets.

On November 1st, 1941, the unit was commissioned as a division. During World War II the division was responsible for housing and training recruits from the naval

divisions all across Canada. In 1959 the Queen Charlotte Armouries was constructed on the Charlottetown waterfront. Today, the HMCS Queen Charlotte is located in a new building further east on the city's waterfront.

For the past 100 years, the navy has had a significant presence in our capital city. There are a number of events taking place in Charlottetown including Canada Day celebrations and open houses later this fall.

I encourage all Islanders to get involved in these activities to show their appreciation to the men and women who stood on guard defending Canada's interest, and those who continue to defend Canada's interest in the world today.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and receiving petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kellys Cross-Cumberland.

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a petition regarding PEI Mudrooters and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Stratford-Kinlock, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, by Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the Annual Report for the

Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning for the period ending March 31st, 2009 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On behalf of the members of the Standing Committee on Legislative Management, I beg leave to table a report of the committee and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Montague-Kilmuir, that the report be received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Gallant: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Montague-Kilmuir, that the report of the committee be adopted.

This report includes the unanimous recommendation that Ms. Maria MacDonald of Charlottetown be appointed as the next Information and Privacy Commissioner for Prince Edward Island.

There will be a motion debated in this House at a later date to confirm this appointment. However, this report discharges the committee's responsibilities to make a recommendation to the House for appointment.

In presenting this report, I wish to thank you, Madam Speaker, and all the members of the committee for their participation and interest in the advertising and recruitment of

a new commissioner. Your committee wishes to thank all those who made application to become commissioner. Your interest in serving the Legislative Assembly and the people of Prince Edward Island in this important area of law is appreciated.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Ms. MacDonald on having received the unanimous recommendation of the committee. I am confident that she has the legal training, experience and skills necessary to be successful as PEI's next Information and Privacy Commissioner. I look forward to discussion on the motion confirming her appointment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

Mr. Dumville: Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries, Transportation and Rural Development, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Dumville: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park, that the report of the committee be adopted.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries, Transportation and Rural Development is pleased to present a report on its activities during the Third Session of the Sixty-third General Assembly. Several areas for investigation have been identified by your committee and work on these will continue. Therefore, by receipt and adoption of this

report by the Legislative Assembly, your committee requests that it be authorized to sit beyond prorogation of the Third Session of the Sixty-third General Assembly in order to conduct further business.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

I would like to at least make a few comments on this report that was done.

This was a multi-million dollar contract that was hand delivered, or hand given. There was absolutely no tender process for it.

We did learn in the standing committee that there was a development agreement between Aliant and government, but we can't seem to get our hands on that agreement yet. I think what was also learned here - there were other service providers that were doing this work in rural Prince Edward Island. They were denied the ability to compete for an open tender process. Not allowing them to compete also meant that when this announcement was made by the government of the day and Aliant on this high-speed Internet service to all of Prince Edward Island, it stopped the federal government from providing those service providers - that were already in place long before Aliant decided they were going to do this - access to this federal funding so they could upgrade their infrastructure or even go out and compete.

What's disappointing to me, and I think a lot of other people, is that government's not supposed to be in the business to create unfair competition. Government's not supposed to be in the business of putting people out of business. We have at least two

service providers that were family-run businesses - one in the east and one in the west - that have invested capital money for years into high-speed Internet services. They have developed a customer base. They have a territory. Now they're being run over by the actions of this government and Aliant, and it's unfair competition. I feel the government should issue a license and a territory to these people and/or take them out.

I wanted to say that because I think there was an injustice done here by the government. They seem to overlook those that are already in business. If it was a tender called and they never won that's fair ball, but this is not fair.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

An Hon. Member: What are you carrying?

Speaker: The report of the committee.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General, that the 2nd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 2, Consideration of the Estimates, 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 Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

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

We're starting on page 47, hon. members.

We had read it and we're having discussion on it, which was secondary programs under the section called English Programs.

Mr. D. Currie: Okay. Now, hold on.

Chair: Hon. minister, whenever you're ready. There's no rush.

Mr. M. Currie: Is elementary programs - has it been carried?

Chair: I don't think -

Mr. M. Currie: No?

Chair: That was carried, hon. member.

Mr. M. Currie: Forty-six.

Chair: Yes. Minister, you have someone you want to bring on?

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah. Could I ask permission to bring on John Cummings, please?

Chair: Permission to bring guests on the floor?

Mr. M. Currie: I wonder, minister, last week when we were leaving here, your deputy was upstairs. Any reason why you didn't want to bring him on the floor?

Mr. D. Currie: Why would I bring my deputy on the floor?

Mr. M. Currie: He represents your department.

Mr. D. Currie: I've got a gentleman right here that's doing a fairly adequate job.

Mr. M. Currie: I just thought - I just don't know -

Mr. D. Currie: I believe he was here for a meeting that I couldn't attend because I was on the floor.

Mr. M. Currie: Oh. Okay.

Mr. D. Currie: He wasn't here for any other reason.

Mr. M. Currie: So you don't want to put him on the floor and face us.

Mr. D. Currie: I wouldn't see there'd be any reason to bring him on the floor.

Mr. M. Currie: We would have a lot of questions for him. Anyway, we'll ask you the questions.

Mr. D. Currie: I'm sure that we would love to - the member, if you would like to call the

office, we'd love to have you in for a chat and have a talk.

Mr. M. Currie: This is the arm - this is where open and transparent government (Indistinct). Not hiding from meetings and hiding from coming to the floor.

Chair: We are under section -

Mr. M. Currie: Open and transparent government.

Chair: Any questions under Secondary Programs? Hon. members, from your material?

Mr. M. Currie: I do. Minister -

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

Mr. M. Currie: Last week I asked you, and it was clearly stated at a number of meetings that I went to over the school closures, that the money that was saved from the closing of the school last year was to go into enriched and enhanced curriculum. Did you bring back how much you spent on that increased and enhanced curriculum and can you show me how you have vaulted our students to the top of the test scores because of those purchases?

Mr. D. Currie: As I alluded to last week, I shared with the members of the House that those positions were all retained. When the process was completed those teachers were placed in schools -

Mr. M. Currie: Teachers have nothing to do with curriculum.

Mr. D. Currie: Anyway - teachers do have a lot to do with curriculum. Teachers are the ones that deliver the curriculum.

Mr. M. Currie: We know we kept all the

teachers on.

Mr. D. Currie: We kept all the teachers. In coming to this position in mid-January, I asked for - of course, not being directly involved with the department last spring I asked for an update from school principals on the transition and how students were doing that were realigned to other schools. The feedback - from what I've gotten from the principals - has been positive. That we've been able to invest in new extracurricular opportunities for children.

For example, kids that were attending schools because of enrollments that weren't able to participate in school programs such as extracurricular sporting activities have now all been exposed to those opportunities. There is a high percentage of students that did require additional resources and supports to support them in their regular programs that now are receiving that work.

Mr. M. Currie: But why would your deputy make that statement, and promise to the parents, the students, last year when you were going through this process to close the schools? I think that's what they accepted. They said: Okay, this government's going to close our schools and shut down our communities. Good. You're going to do it anyway. So let's get on with life and we're going to receive enhanced curriculum and we're going to see a better education model for our students.

I'm just wondering why he would make that promise. Why he would make that statement and not follow through with it. That was a promise made.

Mr. D. Currie: If you look at the overall education budget this year -

Mr. M. Currie: I'm not blaming you.

Mr. D. Currie: No, no. I'm not taking it

personally.

Mr. M. Currie: Well, you should. You're the minister. He won't show up.

Chair: The minister has a comment.

Mr. D. Currie: I basically right now feel that from what I've seen in the three-and-a-half months that the investments have been made. Over 2.5 million has been reinvested back into curriculum for new programming at the high school level trades courses. Obviously the education budget through the budgetary process has come out strong, 6.6% increase. I think that from what I'm seeing in the three-and-a-half months that I've been in the position that we're moving markers in respect to improving the quality of education all across the province. Hopefully, with the investment that we're making with the early childhood sector and bringing the five-year-olds in, we'll continue to strengthen the early years.

The feedback that I'm getting right now from elementary schools across the province is that the investments that have made over the last few years in literacy has shown strong results in respect to reading scores for children that have traditionally have had challenges with their programs.

Mr. M. Currie: I can distinctly remember a number of times, and I think I even remember the amount - it was the front page in the *Graphic*. It was \$1.2 million was going to be dedicated for this. I would think after so cold-heartedly going out and causing the grief, the torment and the torture that you put on these people and the students that you'd follow through with the promise. At least make some effort to bring this enhanced curriculum in and somehow get our students up in the scores.

I mean, if that commitment was made within the superintendent who has been promoted

to deputy minister, certainly you'd think he'd follow through with that.

Mr. D. Currie: I need to be corrected. The investment in curriculum and all curriculum programs has been over 5 million. Basically, as I said earlier, if you look now at the investment that we made by keeping those 20 positions last year, the 40 positions - our class ratios here in the province now are stronger than they've been in the history of the province. Those investments are also being made in programming, such as resource, allowing supports to classroom teachers and educational assistance, to make sure that we're able to support the adopted modified programming in the intermediate levels. But most importantly, helping teachers with their individual educational plans that do require additional supports to meet the needs of students.

Nothing has been taken out of the system. Everything has been reinvested back in. The feedback that I'm getting - and I know as I alluded to last week, I was not the minister as the time, it was the motion time, it was a very high profile discussion and debate in the media.

Mr. M. Currie: Still is. It's not over yet.

Mr. D. Currie: (Indistinct) very interested in following. I think that it's important for myself as the minister who is committed and generated to make sure that those investments get placed in the right place and that children are benefitting from the resources and the extra enhancements that are in place.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, question?

Ms. Dunsford: Yes, just along the topic here, you mentioned the improvements on student-teacher ratio, I believe, minister.

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah.

Ms. Dunsford: Do you have an idea of, not specifically a day and a time, but an idea timeline of when we're going to see that ratio between, I guess now, K and 3? It was promised - we talked about 1 to 3, but is that now K to 3 that we're talking about, the one to 15?

Mr. D. Currie: The enrollment for kindergarten classes next year are set at 15 max. I can't speak specifically, but I do know that right now, as of next fall, we'll have 1,668 teachers. Over the last two years alone we've lost over a thousand students in the system. So we have the opportunity now to have -

Ms. Dunsford: How many students?

Mr. D. Currie: How many total students?

Ms. Dunsford: Well, you got the teacher -

Mr. D. Currie: Over the last two years 500 students per year have left the system and there will be another 500 leaving this year. The ratios - I can't speak specifically, I can bring that information back as far as on average overall ratio number.

Ms. Dunsford: Well, just between 1 and 3, right?, I'm talking about, the early -

Mr. D. Currie: You're looking for the ratio of 1 to 3?

Ms. Dunsford: Yeah.

Mr. D. Currie: Okay. I can bring that back.

Chair: Any questions under Secondary Programs?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total English Programs: 3,004,300.

Shall it carry? Carried.

We are now going to French Programs, hon. members.

General. "Appropriations provided for the development, implementation and maintenance of all programs of study in French First Language, Early and Late French Immersion, Core French, and the purchase of texts and materials. Appropriations are also provided for cost-shared programs under the Official Languages in Education Agreement and for a variety of services to schools and school boards in relation to the administration of French programs."

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct) explain the process of - I know yesterday was an important day for the kindergarten teachers to get notification of what school they'd be actually in. Could you tell us what the process was used for the French school board, the eastern and the western to make those decisions?

Mr. D. Currie: I know that my staff were working closely yesterday with the boards. I know that kindergarten teachers have now been identified to a school. I can't speak specifically on the process, but John, do you want to do an update? I can bring it back if John doesn't have it.

John Cummings Director: Essentially, back in the fall there was an advertisement for people that were currently teaching the kindergarten in the current system. Those people made application if they were interested to teach in the public school system. There was an interview process held at that time and a list selected of qualified candidates. That list was then shared with the school boards depending on where the person had elected that they wanted to work.

Some people were willing to work in the eastern district as well as the western school board, depending on where they lived. That was sort of used to allocate the names to the boards as qualified candidates. Then they went from there to select the candidates for each particular school.

Leader of the Opposition: That's I guess where I have the question. When the board passed the list of potential instructors on to the schools, how were the decisions then made?

John Cummings Director: I believe in the Western School Board they did it probably more as a central board office. I think in the Eastern School District -

Leader of the Opposition: The board actually told which teacher would go to which school?

John Cummings Director: I think in consultation with principals. I think in the Eastern School District it may have been more of a meeting of all the principals where they went through sort of a session on how to allocate the staff.

Leader of the Opposition: Would you check on that? Because I'm hearing a rumour that in the Eastern School District they used a lottery to decide what teacher went to what school, and I'd really like to know what the process was.

John Cummings Director: I wouldn't quantify it as a lottery. I think what they've done is they've taken their pool of candidates and they've gone through a process where - trying to allocate them to each school.

Mr. D. Currie: I know. Just if I could add something. We'll bring that back. I know that they were given one, two and three selections. Obviously they had an

opportunity to present an area and location and there was some distance from where they lived as far as where they could possibly work and so on.

So we'll bring back specifics on that as far as -

Leader of the Opposition: It wasn't so much the travel part, but I'd just like to know what's - it was told to me that perhaps the school number got to choose this teacher or that. I'm just curious: How did they make that decision? Because I'd be kind of concerned with that in comparison that it was based on qualifications and their scores and a whole variety of things.

Mr. D. Currie: I think all the teachers that were in that that made that list already were pre-screened and interviewed and have to meet certain criteria to fit in that group of 112. In order to get - there was pretty extensive screening and interviews done, I believe it was last fall.

John Cummings Director: December and January.

Mr. D. Currie: December and January, okay.

Leader of the Opposition: Up until that point it seemed to be very clear. It's just, again, how then the individual teacher was selected for the school without a process. Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Ms. Dunsford: Specifically right now on the French Programs, is that the section we're -

Chair: We just read the introduction.

Ms. Dunsford: And your questions were

regarding that?

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, the French (Indistinct).

Ms. Dunsford: My question is, when listing off the programming you have French First Language, Early and Late Immersion, Core French. There are some Intensive French Programs taking place on PEI currently. So where does that fall?

Mr. D. Currie: Right now there is a number of schools that are participating in the Intensive French Program. The Intensive French Program is a program that has been introduced in a number of schools across the province. Basically it is a half a year uninterrupted French Language program.

Ms. Dunsford: Grade 6 on, right?

Mr. D. Currie: Grade 6 on. There has been a tremendous amount of success in a number of schools. There is one particular school in the west that basically felt that as students and as families they weren't ready to embrace the program. Research is showing that in order to acquire a French language the uninterrupted intensive focus is much stronger to acquire literacy, French skills.

I know the feedback has been very positive in communities. Some communities are embracing it, some of the communities are looking for it. I think that at some point in time in the real near future we'll have to be evaluating the investment that we're making in Core French: are children benefitting from the Core French program compared to an Intensive French program?

Ms. Dunsford: So I guess my question is, does Intensive French actually fall within this French Programs section of the budget?

Mr. D. Currie: Yes, it does.

Ms. Dunsford: Where's the breakdown? Not specifically a breakdown, but is it just kind of generally included in all the other line items here?

Mr. D. Currie: Yes. It's in the program.

Chair: I'm just going to read the line item, members, in case this question's under there specific.

Administration: 9,300. Materials, Supplies and Services: 550,600. Professional and Contract Services: 38,900. Salaries: 1,212,900. Travel and Training: 37,200. Grants: 195,000. Total General: 2,043,900.

Any questions, hon. members, under those sections?

An Hon. Member: Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: Professional and -

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Professional and contract services. What are those?

Mr. D. Currie: It would essentially be teacher travel to go to workshops and PD.

Mr. Bagnall: Why wouldn't it be under travel and training, then, if it was travel?

Mr. D. Currie: They would be board employees. They're not our employees, they're board. They're the Western, the Eastern and the French school board staff.

Mr. Bagnall: So you're telling me that the trustees' travel expenses were 195,000?

Mr. D. Currie: Trustees? We're not talking about trustees. We're talking about teachers.

Mr. Bagnall: Teachers? So their travel

expenses were 195,000?

Mr. D. Currie: No, 38,900.

Chair: Travel and training is 37,200.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Mr. D. Currie: I think you're looking at grants

Chair: The grants are 195,000.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. The grants. Will you give me a breakdown on those?

Mr. D. Currie: Right here.

Mr. Bagnall: It says cultural activity. What do you mean by cultural activity? I mean, for 20,000, where does that money go?

Mr. D. Currie: It would be designated for students who are participating in French cultural exchange language programs, going to Quebec City or France, or wherever the case may be.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. So then the distance education, who gets the 14,800, or where did that go to?

John Cummings Director: Those would be funds that would be used if, say, children or students in the French language school board were taking courses through Moncton or through distance education outside the province.

Mr. Bagnall: All right. French teachers' bursaries, 15 grand, what was that for?

John Cummings Director: We'd have to get the exact details on that, but I believe they give bursaries to teachers that are training for French, taking French training, additional training.

Mr. Bagnall: So how many teachers are actually taking the French training?

Mr. D. Currie: We'd have to break - that's all worked through the boards, but we can bring that back.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. So then you get French student bursaries. What are they for?

John Cummings Director: That would also be for if they were taking additional courses.

Mr. Bagnall: For students?

John Cummings Director: To enhance their training, like, say if they were going on exchanges or that type of thing, to help them with their programming costs.

Mr. Bagnall: So that money, 46,000, you pay for students to go to school and take French training?

John Cummings Director: It wouldn't be in the school system. It would be more if they were taking a course or some type of outside school type initiative.

Mr. Bagnall: Give me an example.

John Cummings Director: Say if they were taking an exchange to Quebec, or something, the teacher exchange, or student exchange.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. So, a student exchange. So you're going to - if the students are going on an exchange trip, you're going to take them into the classroom and give them French training and pay them for doing it?

Mr. D. Currie: (Indistinct).

John Cummings Director: (Indistinct).

Mr. D. Currie: No, they're getting paid - the department is committed to providing

any child in this province any opportunity they want to acquire additional French language training.

John Cummings Director: Yes.

Mr. D. Currie: That could come through instruction. Some of that money is used, for example, French Immersion classes, or Late Immersion or Early Immersion, that travel to Quebec City. I know that there's a number of classes that go to France. A lot of that money is - I know there's an application process, they can apply for additional supports because a lot of them do have to fundraise. Sometimes there's additional, but I mean, specifically for teachers, if they're looking for upgrades and training opportunities through the university, that sort of -

Mr. Bagnall: So you're telling me that if a student exchange group are going to the Madeleine Islands, which is a French community, that you will pay a bursary to those students to get some more French so they can go?

Mr. D. Currie: Maybe not that specific, but it depends on where they're going. I mean, there's an application process, there's all kinds of really positive programs. There (Indistinct) programs that we do partner with the federal government on exchange opportunities. The province is involved and there's a tremendous amount of uptake. Obviously (Indistinct) -

Mr. Bagnall: I see 42,000 -

Mr. D. Currie: - (Indistinct) very well spent money. I think it's important for us as a province in a country with two official languages to provide every opportunity we can, and certainly pleased with the commitment that we've been able to hold on to that area of funding to make sure that we do provide training for our students that are

in our Late and Early Immersion programs, and some of the money through programs has been there to support teachers for the new programs. The Intensive French programs are very popular, have gone over well. I think down in Cardigan there's one that's going very well and parents are very pleased -

Mr. Bagnall: What's that program?

Mr. D. Currie: I just explained it. The Intensive French program is a new program that is offered to - there are a number of schools right now that are offered to participate, and basically it replaces the Core French program. The Core French program was designed to provide French language instruction for 30 minutes a day. The Intensive French program will provide a half a year or semester of uninterrupted French language instruction, which certainly supports the acquisition of the language much more efficiently and more effectively, and the data would indicate that.

Mr. Bagnall: These bursaries that you're giving to French students, how much are they? I mean, are you giving them a thousand, are you giving them 1,500, are you giving them 5,000? What are you giving them?

Mr. D. Currie: We can bring back specifics and sort of roll out what was given out per student or per group, I mean, that's no problem. We can break that all down for you.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct).

Mr. D. Currie: So you're looking for a breakdown of all that -

Mr. Bagnall: I'm curious on the student bursary part of it. I'm not criticizing or anything. I just think it's a good program, and I'd like to see how - and minister, how

do they apply for it? Because I'm sure there's an awful lot of kids out there don't even know it exists.

Mr. D. Currie: We do a good job of making sure the boards are aware, and the department does a good job of getting information out. We'll bring a breakdown of how that money's used.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

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

Mr. M. Currie: In our previous session we asked there last week, I just looked back there on a note, that you were going to bring back the inventory of all the schools and there was a videoconferencing piece of equipment that went from St. Teresa's to Morell. We're just wondering if that's been hooked up.

Mr. D. Currie: The videoconferencing equipment went to Morell high school.

Mr. M. Currie: It's hooked up?

Mr. D. Currie: Yes, I -

John Cummings Director: Apparently.

Mr. M. Currie: I must drop in and have a look, then.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) from here.

Mr. D. Currie: It's basically what now they're determining how the - I guess it's quite a piece of equipment -

Mr. M. Currie: State of the art.

Mr. D. Currie: State of the art, yes, and state of the art. Wasn't that your riding?

Mr. M. Currie: No. It's not my riding.

An Hon. Member: No, that's Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. D. Currie: St. Teresa?

Mr. M. Currie: No.

Mr. D. Currie: No? Anyway, to answer your question, the equipment is at Montague and right now they're -

Mr. M. Currie: Oh, it's in Montague.

Mr. D. Currie: - looking at - sorry, Morell.

Mr. M. Currie: Morell.

Mr. D. Currie: Morell. Sorry. It's at Morell, and the equipment is being looked at how it can be incorporated into the courses and the curriculum that's there. But the equipment is at Morell high school.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay. Thank you.

Chair: Is there something else?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you. You mentioned French student travel and you talked about exchange programs when we were talking about that bit of money. When I come down here, I see French student exchange again for 10,000. Are you using it from both places for them or what are you doing?

Mr. D. Currie: What we'll do on that is we'll bring you back a detailed breakdown of how that money exactly is. I can't speak to that level right now and neither can John, but we will bring that back for you to answer into those questions.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. What's a leadership and mentorship initiatives? What is that,

minister?

John Cummings Director: That would be for leadership at the school systems, the principals and that type of thing for training for them.

Mr. Bagnall: So the other stuff, you're going to bring that information back?

Mr. D. Currie: We'll bring all that.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, we'll just hold that carry until we get that.

Chair: Okay, moving on.

Child and Student Services.

General. "Appropriations provided to support students and schools, including the Provincial Adolescent School, support for diversity in education and school health initiatives." Administration: 3,600. Equipment: 8,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 12,600. Professional and Contract Services: 5,000. Salaries: 651,200. Travel and Training: 24,500. Grants: 428,200. Total General: 1,133,100.

Any questions on that section?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Back to the grants again.

Mr. D. Currie: Grants? Down at the bottom, the 428? So do you want me to go through them?

Mr. Bagnall: The Allied Youth, that's not a problem, I understand it. Learning disability capacity was a \$20,000 grant. Where does that go and why? I understand why, but who gets it and is that available to get it or other issues or other areas to get it?

John Cummings Director: That would be

money used to further the work of groups that have learning disabilities. We'd have to bring specifically what organizations get that, but that's what it's intended for.

Mr. Bagnall: So this money, this 20,000, is given out to organizations to help children with learning disabilities?

John Cummings Director: Essentially to help children and students with learning disabilities. I'd have to bring back exactly -

Mr. Bagnall: Can you bring that back? Because I think that's important because there's a lot of organizations out there that would like grants.

John Cummings Director: It would be more probably for assisting groups or students that have learning disabilities or some groups. I wouldn't want to say it's entirely for just organizations.

Mr. Bagnall: So that's to come. All right, then there's Learning Disabilities Association of PEI, they're getting 52,600. What organization, what disability groups are getting that 52,000?

Mr. D. Currie: We'll have to bring specifics back on the number.

Mr. Bagnall: You don't have that information with you?

Mr. D. Currie: No, we just know that they get, right now, the (Indistinct) - we'll bring specifics. Who gets it, why they use it, how they use it.

Mr. Bagnall: The Aboriginal student achievement, 172,000. You must have some information on that with that kind of money.

John Cummings Director: We are in the process of signing new tuition agreements with the two bands, the Abegweit band and

the Lennox Island band. Essentially, as part of that tuition agreement, part of the increase in the tuition is going to be used to fund the initiatives to help improve student achievement for Aboriginal students.

Mr. Bagnall: So basically this pays for the Aboriginals' tuition to university?

John Cummings Director: No, this would be used in the public school system. The students that are from the two bands, they pay a tuition fee to the province since they're federally funded through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Essentially, part of the increase in tuition that has been negotiated with the band is going to be used to develop initiatives to further enhance student achievement activities for those particular students.

Chair: Any further questions on that section?

Mr. Bagnall: You'll bring that back, minister? We'll wait until that comes back before we carry it.

Chair: English/French as an Additional Language. "Appropriations provided for the delivery of English/French as an additional language programs within the public education system." Administration: 68,900. Equipment: 60,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 50,000. Professional and Contract Services: 107,400. Salaries: 1,919,800. Travel and Training: 22,500. Total English/French as an Additional Language: 2,228,600.

Questions?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: This is for mostly immigrant students?

Mr. D. Currie: EAL, yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: With the previous projections from 2008, how many people are you receiving as new students on a monthly basis now?

Mr. D. Currie: Okay, I'll give you some information here. Right now we've got approximately 650 immigrant students from K to 12. Ninety-five per cent of those students are in classrooms in the Eastern School District. There's 200 new EAL students registered in school in 2009/2010. Fifteen per cent of our immigration population are refugee status. As you're probably aware, the refugee population, because of some of their post-traumatic stress issues, require a tremendous amount of service in respect to - and I know that from my experience. We were a school that often engaged with refugee students and I saw that firsthand, some of the horror that they witnessed, and how it was playing out, and them trying to adjust to their new culture and their new world without a dad or a mom or over here with grandparents or whatever.

We obviously have a partnership with (Indistinct) to look at service, to meet the needs of all immigrant students -

Leader of the Opposition: On that, I have no issues on that. I was just curious in terms of the numbers of how many extra students. The 650 that are in K to 12, that's what's there now?

Mr. D. Currie: That's there right now.

Leader of the Opposition: And then is there another 200 students expected?

Mr. D. Currie: That's been a fairly consistent number in our service, the 200.

Leader of the Opposition: Two-hundred additional on top of the 650?

Mr. D. Currie: No

Leader of the Opposition: No, it's included in the 650?

Mr. D. Currie: It's included, yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Do you have a transient population there? Like, students come in. Do they stay a year and leave?

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah, that's a good question. Right now we're looking at a retention. Our EAL/FAL numbers indicate a retention rate over last year of about over 75%.

Leader of the Opposition: So you do the stats on that every year?

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah, we do. This is Janet Perry-Payne's section. She coordinates. She was an EAL teacher at Colonel Gray.

We have come a long way in five years from where we were. I mean, we've got a designated unit now of EAL teachers to engage and there's a strategy, there's leadership. So we have some cohesiveness in respect to service delivery. Right now, in Colonel Gray High School, I think over 10% of the population is of immigrant status.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Special Education Services. "Appropriations provided to support services for students with special needs including those for hearing impaired students. Some services are provided in partnership with the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority and in collaboration with other government departments." Administration: Nil. Equipment: 72,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 36,000. Professional and Contract Services: 19,700. Salaries: 1,060,200. Travel and Training: 34,000. Grants: 889,700. Total

Special Education Services: 2,111,600.

Any questions?

Leader of the Opposition: Just the one question.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: The administration, how come there are no dollars there?

Mr. D. Currie: Do you want to speak to that?

John Cummings Director: There were a few dollars spent in the forecast. You see there - the \$4,600 -

Leader of the Opposition: Right.

John Cummings Director: That was spent on some office supplies and some meetings. So that's why you see that particular. It's the forecast amount. There's nothing -

Leader of the Opposition: Budgeted.

John Cummings Director: - budgeted for either year.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Autism Services. "Appropriations provided for supporting autism intervention services." Administration: 4,900. Equipment: 400. Materials, Supplies and Services: 17,300. Professional and Contract Services: 5,000. Salaries: 596,900. Travel and Training: 14,800. Grants: 613,400. Total Autism Services: 1,252,700.

Any questions?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Minister, there was a review of provincial autism services performed by the department of education.

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: Can you table that for us?

Mr. D. Currie: I'll be bringing that report out before the House closes. We're just finalizing. Basically, the strategy right now is still being worked on. I've asked my staff to - I want to bring my report on the strategy forward. I'm hoping to have that no later than the first part of next week.

In respect to how the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is responding, I met with some of the senior staff today. Obviously I've had some pretty interesting discussions with families. I do have an interest in this area because of my background. I worked very closely with a lot of children and families with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I'm looking forward to bringing the report.

HRA did some work. The Autism Society was part of that discussion. We'll be bringing some recommendations and some changes forward, such as things around ministerial directives. There is an issue around tutor wages. If you'll look at the budget, I've been able to get some increases to support the tutor.

One of the issues that I'm extremely interested in looking at further is that, right now, when I talk to families, one of the big challenges that - not all families - there's a real issue with the retention of tutors.

Leader of the Opposition: Qualified staff.

Mr. D. Currie: And tutors.

I'm not a parent of a child with autism. I

would never want to - because of the challenges and the issues that families are dealing with - I know my daughter has a friend of hers - she's been in the same class now for five years, so I know the family well and have had discussions with them on some of the challenges in respect to the system, some of their frustration. That report will continue to move some markers forward as we look at strengthening our ability to meet the needs and provide services.

One of the issues that I'm really interested in looking at - and I had a discussion over the last month - was looking at this whole issue around tutors. Right now it's the responsibility of families to find the tutors, to retain the tutors and so on. So I'm looking at having more discussion on - about taking that responsibility away from families to sort of have a centralized service to manage that responsibility.

One of the issues is that it's difficult to retain tutors. We all know the importance of uninterrupted stable supports and services, particularly during March break and summer vacation and Christmas and so on. Because we know the importance of identification and early intervention, but we also know the consistency that children with Autism Spectrum Disorder - the need for that fluency in respect to their training. Something that I'm going to look more into.

Right now we haven't got it set up, but I've asked my staff that I'd be interested in talking more about that as we look at - we have been successful. We do have in the department - we have six - we have an individual coming in, and autism staff. We're up to six right now. We've got three full-time, three temporary. So we are making some inroads. There have been some vacancies in that service in the department for quite some time.

Leader of the Opposition: What's the issue

on filling the vacancies?

Mr. D. Currie: One of the vacancies has just been filled.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. D. Currie: There's a lady who will be starting within the next couple weeks, John? So that brings us to a total of six.

John Cummings Director: The whole section will be eight.

Mr. D. Currie: The whole section will be eight in total. There has been, from what I understand, I was told that there has been some challenges filling positions since 2007. But over the last six months we've had some luck attracting people from outside the province to come to the province to work inside the department.

Leader of the Opposition: Was it an issue of salary or was it an issue of finding people that had the right training or what was?

Mr. D. Currie: I don't know. John, you can speak. Was it more salary? Was it more -

John Cummings Director: It's demand. There is a lot of demand for these particular people that have these skills. It's been very difficult to try to attract them because every jurisdiction is keen to have people with those particular skills. We've been very fortunate in the last six months that we've been able to find some people that are highly qualified and have opted to come to the province.

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah. One of the things that I've been - over the last few months - I worked in the school system. I worked with families. Over the last few months I've spent a lot of time understanding what we are as a department, our services. How effective are our services, the way we are

working with families - is it the best way, are there more efficient, effective ways?

We did meet with the Autism Society. I thought the meeting went very well. I've had a number of meetings with families. There is a level of frustration, at times, but I made it very clear to the Autism Society and parents that I want to continue to improve the way that we can provide services to families. I'm very open for dialogue and suggestions about - if there's ways that we're providing that service, is there a better way to do it? I know something that I just alluded to - the issue around the tutors has been a real frustration, from what I'm hearing from families, because that's a responsibility on top of everything else they have to deal with.

I'm certainly willing to take a look at another model of how we do that.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. When you look at the other model, will you be looking at skill sets, education, and salary?

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah. To be honest, we're just having some preliminary discussions it. Because that seems to be something I'm hearing consistently from families. They're saying: I have to go out and find the tutor.

There seems to be a lot of interruption. Now, some families are a little more fortunate than others. They have a tutor that stays.

Leader of the Opposition: Because some families subsidize, right?

Mr. D. Currie: That's right. Some families subsidize. Some families can subsidize.

Leader of the Opposition: And many can't.

Mr. D. Currie: So there are some challenges from that perspective. But -

Leader of the Opposition: What's the waitlist, minister, from the time when a child gets to have an assessment and then they actually get -

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah. The work that we're doing with bringing the focus now with the zero to four, with the five-year-olds in the system, we've made a commitment that supports to the five-year-olds will stay the same and not be a draw on the school supports. One of the things that we have implemented the first time in the history of the province - we've introduced the universal screening tool, Dr. Doug Willms' screening assessment tool, which has been implemented, so we know the importance of early intervention.

At the same time, intervention - once you identify a child in a family that is dealing with autism, there has to be the supports in place.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. What's the average age that the child actually gets the assessment?

Mr. D. Currie: I don't have a specific number. I can't pull that from the top of my head, but I can bring that back.

I'm interested, as the minister, to look at working with the autism community. I made that very clear to the Autism Society. I want to be able to move markers. We do have a high volume of children with various needs in the system. We have to make sure that we're paying attention to other children in the system was well, as far as learning disabilities and whatever the case may be.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, we cannot carry that last line. We're waiting for information to come

back.

Moving on to page 49.

Joint Consortium for School Health.

Joint Consortium for School Health. "The Joint Consortium For School Health represents education and health ministries across all provinces and territories, except Quebec. The organization is responsible for promoting collaboration within and across provincial, territorial and federal boundaries to improve health and learning of Canada's children and youth. The consortium will be housed in PEI for the next five years."

Administration: 21,600. Materials, Supplies and Services: 12,000. Professional and Contract Services: 88,400. Salaries: 308,000. Travel and Training: 70,000. Total Joint Consortium for School Health: 500,000.

Questions?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, that's all that we can finish up on this department today. Various materials coming back under the general part of Child and Student Services and under French Programs.

Mr. M. Currie: (Indistinct) the inventory, bringing that back too?

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah, the inventory. Is that the video?

Mr. M. Currie: No, it was a complete inventory done on all the schools that were closed of computers, smart board stuff. I think some of it is in Dundas now. I don't know where it is, but -

John Cummings Director: IT Shared Services would have been responsible for moving the computers around. I've talked to

the Eastern School District and they've said that they've been moved to various schools within the district. The first priority was the receiving schools (Indistinct) students. Then, once those schools were adequately resourced for the incoming students, if there were additional machines or that type of thing, computers, they were redeployed within the district to other schools.

But the primary focus was ensuring that the receiving schools of those students were adequately resourced with (Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: But I'm sure if somebody had an inventory of before you cleaned out Eastern Kings School, that all the desks, all the computers, so that went somewhere. If that went to Souris, then if there was any surplus left it went to Dundas. That's what I'm looking for, an accounting of where all the equipment went.

Mr. D. Currie: No problem. We'll -

Mr. M. Currie: You'll bring that back?

Mr. D. Currie: We'll work with the Eastern School District to get all that. Obviously, you're looking for where the French grants are. I'll bring all that back. I'll bring back everything. I've got my staff watching.

Mr. M. Currie: Your deputy's upstairs watching, is he?

Mr. D. Currie: No, he's not.

Mr. M. Currie: He's not upstairs?

Mr. D. Currie: I'm looking forward to the hon. member from Georgetown calling the office. We'll even provide lunch and we'll have a good discussion about some of the questions that you want to ask (Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: You didn't answer the ones I already asked. Once you bring back the

answers, then we'll think about having lunch.

Chair: The other two items that are being brought back or requested to be brought back is more of a breakdown of what each grant was for. Would you be satisfied with the assurance of the minister to bring those back and carrying these sections?

Mr. M. Currie: That's not the same fellow that promised he was going to open the emergency room in Montague? Is that the same promise? That's the fella? You want me to hold him to his words?

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

Mr. Sheridan: (Indistinct) proposing that we carry this department and have the minister bring it back.

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, bring back the information on that.

One more question. The Souris High School, K-12. There was a motion passed in June of 2009 to commence construction. Now it's 2015. Any reason why it's pushed out so far?

Mr. D. Currie: It's an \$18 million investment in Souris. We've got a 22 million -

Mr. M. Currie: Eighteen? It'd be more like 30 million.

Mr. D. Currie: No, it's 18.

Mr. M. Currie: Must be a small box that you're building, this one.

Mr. D. Currie: No. I think it's 18, John, on (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: It was 24 million for the

box that you built in Montague.

Mr. D. Currie: Eighteen and a half million for the total project in Souris, 22 for the school in Montague.

I guess, basically, there was issues around capital budget. We're moving forward on a very aggressive manor replacement program. The 70-plus million at the QEH. We know how much pavement's going down.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah, but Chester had all that done before you came here, the QEH.

Mr. D. Currie: Pardon?

Mr. M. Currie: Chester had all that done before you came here.

I just want to ask the question, on a kindergarten, an elementary school and a high school, all on new green ground, and a green school, is going to be \$18 million. I would love to see the blueprints for that one.

Chair: Going back, hon. members -

Mr. M. Currie: It wouldn't be much bigger than this room. Phone booth.

Chair: Hon. members.

Mr. M. Currie: Yes, if you bring the information back we'll pass it.

Mr. D. Currie: I'll bring it back.

Chair: Okay, we have to go back and carry.

Mr. M. Currie: Take the minister at his word.

Chair: Carry it as read.

I have to read the final total.

Total Joint Consortium for School Health: 500,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Learning and Early Childhood Development Branch: 21,394,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: 220,505,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Thank you, hon. members.

We're going to move on to the next page which is IRAC, which the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General is responsible for as well.

Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission. General. "Appropriations provided primarily to cover costs related to the Land and Property Division of the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission." Operating Grant: 1,308,400. Total General: 1,308,400. Total Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission: 1,308,400.

Questions?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: I see, minister, you're slashing and cutting the budget here by a certain amount. Are you cutting John Broderick's wages? No 7.5 cutback here or anything?

Mr. D. Currie: Twenty-six thousand was taken. It was a general 2% reduction from their overall budget.

Mr. M. Currie: Two percent. Can you tell

me who is on the board now?

Mr. Brown: All good people.

Mr. M. Currie: John has got the answer.

Mr. D. Currie: Moe Rodgeron is one, John Broderick.

Mr. M. Currie: John.

Mr. D. Currie: Ernest Arsenault, John Broderick, David Holmes, Chester MacNeill, Allan Rankin and Moe Rodgeron.

Mr. M. Currie: Can you tell me if there's anybody on there from Kings County? Sounds like they're all from Charlottetown and Prince County.

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah, her term has just expired.

Mr. M. Currie: Who?

Mr. D. Currie: Anne Petley, who was on from Kings County, just expired.

Mr. M. Currie: Anne Petley?

Mr. D. Currie: Petley.

Mr. Brown: Come on, now. (Indistinct) those appointments would have happened (Indistinct) administration.

Mr. M. Currie: You guys are in business for almost three years, though.

Mr. Brown: (Indistinct) all of those appointments would have been through you.

Mr. M. Currie: No. So you're going to put somebody on from Kings County?

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. M. Currie: Wait now, wait now. Just don't try and ram it through.

Chair: Hon. member, your colleague has carried it. I would hope you would agree with your colleague to carry this section.

Mr. M. Currie: I just had one -

Chair: One more question?

Mr. M. Currie: Are you going to try and get somebody on from Kings County?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) ram it through on you.

Mr. M. Currie: Yes, that's exactly what they're trying to do.

Mr. D. Currie: I think most of the boards have Island representation and before we make those decisions we think of communities and balance.

Mr. M. Currie: Discuss them at Cabinet. There is one Cabinet minister there, he'll be looking after it.

Mr. D. Currie: All the appointments go through Executive Council and (Indistinct) PEI.

Mr. M. Currie: Bruce McIsaac is looking for an appointment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Already carried.

Thank you, minister.

Mr. D. Currie: He's wound up today, isn't he?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: Minister, do you

want to do the Office of the Attorney General?

Chair: Are you ready to do that today? Or another day?

Mr. D. Currie: I don't have any staff here, but I could probably - I'll do it.

Chair: Okay.

Page 117. Actually it's page 120 we're going to start on, members.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Because he doesn't have his staff with him, do you have the packages of information?

Chair: You don't have your materials (Indistinct).

Mr. D. Currie: I don't have anything here.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Then we better not do it until we have the information.

Mr. D. Currie: Okay.

Chair: We'll defer that until we the minister has his materials prepared.

Leader of the Opposition: You know what you're bringing back, right? From the Office of the Attorney General for all the documentation?

Mr. D. Currie: I'll have that all ready.

Leader of the Opposition: When you bring it back would you have it in order that we go through it?

Mr. D. Currie: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, thank

you.

Chair: We're going to bring the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness on.

Page 99, we'll be starting with in a moment when the minister's ready. Oh, that's Health PEI. Sorry about that. We'll start at page, I think, 94.

Whenever you're ready, minister. Is there anyone you'd like to bring on the floor, minister?

Ms. Bertram: Permission, Madam Chair, and members, to bring on my director of finances, Kevin Barnes, for the Department of Health and Wellness.

Chair: Permission granted.

Ms. Bertram: He knows lots.

Chair: Okay, hon. members, we're starting at the top of page 94.

Finance and Corporate Management.

General. "Appropriations provided for the administration of the Minister's and the Deputy Minister's offices and to support the Department in carrying out its corporate management responsibilities in the areas of financial administration and monitoring, human resource management, and communications." Administration: 60,700 -

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Have material? It'd be helpful to have first.

Chair: Yes, she has. Of course. Sorry about that.

Mr. Bagnall: How many copies of each have you got there?

Ms. Bertram: I think there's copies there for -

Kevin Barnes Director: There's four copies of the package.

Ms. Bertram: One for the Clerk and three for the members and any other members that would like copies can request.

Chair: I'll just read it while they're passing it out. Is that suitable?

Leader of the Opposition: Sure, it's just helpful to have it so we can go through each item, especially the contract services.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, I know when you went into communities, cultural affairs, you turned around and remodelled all your offices and the staff, all the department. Did you do that with health when you came in?

Ms. Bertram: I think, to answer your question, hon. member, when I was the previous minister of communities, cultural affairs and labour, we were actually in an office area at the back of the Attorney General so we really didn't have offices. Our staff - and that was prior to - with the way the structuring of departments. Because community affairs was associated with Attorney General at one time.

About a year ago when we did change offices and our finance shop, Kevin (Indistinct) was able to be there, our sport, and also our Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat was part of that. We're in the same offices now because community and cultural affairs ceases to exist as a department.

Mr. Bagnall: So you still have your same office you had before?

Ms. Bertram: We are still in the same offices.

Mr. Bagnall: I wouldn't move out of that plush office, either, minister.

Chair: Ready to proceed?

Administration: 60,700. Equipment: 21,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 51,400. Professional and Contract Services: 67,500. Salaries: 1,243,400. Travel and Training: 46,500. Total General: 1,491,000.

Questions on the sections?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Salaries. How many deputy ministers are in this group?

Ms. Bertram: Maybe just to bring light to everyone and to the Leader of the Opposition's question, now that Department of Health and Wellness is structured as a department - and as you see in the Budget book, we have the health authority Health PEI. So for the department of health, we have one deputy minister and we have a CEO of Health PEI, which we will do further on.

Leader of the Opposition: The CEO is further on -

Ms. Bertram: Exactly. So right now, this is - Tracey Cutcliffe is the deputy minister of the department.

Leader of the Opposition: Besides the deputy, who else is in this 1.2 million?

Ms. Bertram: This would be our - Kevin, who is sitting beside me, our administrative assistants for the deputy and the minister. It would be human resource manager, clerks, receptionists, financial officers. Those are those types of positions that would be in this.

Leader of the Opposition: Do you have

any casual positions in this?

Ms. Bertram: We have a few. Again, it's because of the restructuring. We have a few positions that are new to this and they will be posted after the Budget has been passed.

Leader of the Opposition: So they're vacant right now?

Ms. Bertram: Yes.

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

Mr. M. Currie: All the other sections here, minister, like health recruiting and retention, is that all gone over to Leo Stevens and them? They look after all of this now? You're just -

Ms. Bertram: Everything that you see before you under the Department of Health and Wellness, those four or five pages are all within the department. Everything that you see as a title in the Budget as Health PEI are under the authority of Health PEI.

Mr. M. Currie: But you still are -

Ms. Bertram: But the recruitment office is under our shop. It's still under the department.

Mr. M. Currie: The hospitals belong to them?

Ms. Bertram: The operations of our hospitals, our community hospitals, will be under the operations of Health PEI, but under the legislation it's up to the department to set the policy and then they will operate through that policy.

Mr. M. Currie: Do you think you had to formulate this extra layer to do that? You don't think you could have done that before?

Ms. Bertram: I think what's important to note is that when there was a dissolving of those community boards across PEI with those hospitals that did exist, there was the understanding that there was going to be one created. I know the Leader of the Opposition has quoted the governance document that was one and we worked toward this one board, one Island health care system.

I think by the credibility of those people that are now being put on that board, I have a lot of faith in those individuals that they're very representative of Prince Edward Island and of health care and of where we should go into the future. We are the last jurisdiction to sort of break into a department and health authority.

Mr. M. Currie: So what happens, then? You say you're responsible for policy.

Ms. Bertram: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: And they're responsible for the day to day operations.

Ms. Bertram: There's a lot of other things, if you look. There's policy and system planning, the recruitment retention. We have the Chief Health Officer, so Dr. Heather Morrison, Dr. Lamont Sweet, environmental health officers, epidemiology. All that is under us, under the department, and then the operations are over with Health PEI.

Mr. M. Currie: But on the day to day operations, if you can't find anybody to go to Tyne Valley, does that lower the credibility of the hospital up there, their accreditation?

Ms. Bertram: You mean in terms of the recruitment issue around Tyne Valley?

Mr. M. Currie: Yes.

Ms. Bertram: I know the hon. Chair has

brought that question forward. We've had excellent site visits over the last month and there are two or three physicians very interested in Tyne Valley. The packages of licensure, all that, has gone out to them, and references and all that, so we're following through with the process.

Mr. M. Currie: But who makes that decision? Does health authority now? Or do you make that decision? Does the health authority come in and say: We can't find anybody, we're recommending we move Tyne Valley down to O'Leary or Alberton? Can that happen? Do they make that decision or do you?

Ms. Bertram: I think, hon. member, that obviously would be a policy decision and we're working with the complement that exists in our province and we're working to fill the position in Tyne Valley -

Mr. M. Currie: I'm not -

Ms. Bertram: No, no.

Mr. M. Currie: - (Indistinct) you're not trying to do it.

Ms. Bertram: No, no, but the recruitment and retention office will still remain committed to recruitment. We'll work collaboratively, though, with Health PEI. They will be obviously be the day to day operations, bringing those issues forward. But if there's a major policy shift, that would be with our department first.

Mr. M. Currie: I'm just trying to get from you -

Ms. Bertram: The process.

Mr. M. Currie: - how much authority they have, or, how big a stick do they swing to operate.

Ms. Bertram: I think, again, they're operating. They're going to operate within the context that the department and the government sets as a policy initiative, and obviously, we have the Corpus Sanchez report. We have the Healthy Aging Strategy. There's a lot of documents there. We're going to have a business plan to be presented, a strategic plan, so they're going to have a context to operate within. But I think what's important is we have to stay committed to this one Island health board, and it's representative of our communities.

Mr. M. Currie: You're looking for a doctor now for about 18 months, but you feel comfortable that one's going to come soon?

Ms. Bertram: I'm actually quite excited with the site visits, and Marney MacRae, who's within our recruitment and retention shop, has done an excellent job. Sheila MacLean. I feel very confident, and it's not just Tyne Valley. Souris and Hunter River are also needing doctors, and Montague now, actually.

We're doing a better job at advertising. We needed to get into those medical journals, to get the message out, whether it's *British Medical Journal*, the *American Journal of Medicine*, to get the word out. Because obviously some of our doctors now are coming from overseas and outside of Canada.

Mr. M. Currie: Do you feel that the College of Physicians are a little more flexible in their accepting doctors from outside of this country?

Ms. Bertram: I think they're doing the best job that they can in terms of assessing the skill sets, and making sure that they - obviously, they have to make sure they meet Canadian competencies with whatever, if they're a GP or whether they're a specialist. Those checks and balances have to be there.

Mr. M. Currie: Does that happen in Montague now, too, that you'll have the final say on the emergency room, not the health -

Ms. Bertram: The issue around the reduction in emergency room, or emergency department services, at Kings County has been - now it's based on ER nurses. So our recruitment and retention office does still work on that side. It's not just about doctors. It's about other health care professionals as well.

Mr. M. Currie: I thought the excuse used before was the doctors didn't want it, but the doctors don't set the policy, you do.

Ms. Bertram: I haven't used that terminology at all.

Mr. M. Currie: I never said it was you.

Ms. Bertram: The terminology that's always been given by the department, it was the combined lab techs that was the shortage back in April of last year, when the reduction in hours at Kings County - and now we find ourselves, I believe it's January, where we have the ER nurse shortage. This is not just PEI.

Mr. M. Currie: Are you excited about it opening up 24 hours, too?

Ms. Bertram: Again, if we have the professionals there to operate within that system, we will. We have to ensure safety for our patients and for those other staff that are operating within that context.

Mr. M. Currie: That is quite a concern down there and I'm sure it is down in Tyne Valley -

Ms. Bertram: But we have ensured that EMS has put an extra truck in that area, that they have increased service because of that,

as well.

Mr. M. Currie: That's another one that you just raised now. EMS, we're just doing a little bit of a chat here (Indistinct) -

Ms. Bertram: Sure. Fireside chat.

Mr. M. Currie: On Tignish -

Ms. Bertram: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: - we're going to use -

Ms. Bertram: The paramedicine (Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: - to go in and do home care.

Ms. Bertram: I think what has been given is the wrong impression, hon. member.

I think we are, again, looking at a rural development policy. We are trying to use our health professionals to the fullest scope of practice and proximity to our rural communities. If you look at - which we will when we get to Health PEI, which has a home care and support, is that line in that section of the budget. We're not taking away from home care. We view this pilot, and it's still in its developmental stages, we view our paramedics as a valued health professional within our communities, and if we can get this through - this money has been allocated within our budget, it's over and above the home care budget, it's 115,000. We have increased the home care budget by 750,000, but it's separate.

Mr. M. Currie: Is this being generated from EMS, ambulance?

Ms. Bertram: This has been generated by a policy within government. We obviously have seen other jurisdictions that have taken on this model, and we're just piloting to see

if there's value in it. But we have a lot of paramedics out there that see a value in this, but we're still developing it. It is within this budget year, and details will continue to come.

Mr. M. Currie: They're going to do house calls when they're not doing calls that -

Ms. Bertram: That's a misconception that has been in the public. We're not trying to take a truck out of service that's doing on-call duty. This might mean maybe a paramedic might have another type of vehicle. They're a paramedic, they might be going to your house, they might be making that type of visit, but it's not to take away from the on-call service from EMS.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition had a -

Leader of the Opposition: Since we're having a chat, I'm curious to hear the philosophy from the department of social, or health, on the principles of health care that you're going to be transferring around policy to the health authority. What are your principles?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Ms. Bertram: I think that what's most important is that we're not transferring policy -

Mr. M. Currie: You guys (Indistinct).

Ms. Bertram: The policy rests with the Department of Health and Wellness. Our policy, and what we believe in, are the core values of equity within our system, quality of service, delivery of service, and the equity across the system.

I think, hon. Leader of the Opposition, is utilizing our health professionals, whether they be our physicians, whether they be our

RNs, our LPNs, our RCWs, any type of health care medics, health professionals, within our system, using their full scope of practice.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. On that, then, would you describe for us the model of care that you actually use at all our hospitals in the province right now, and highlight how it's consistent or what are differences?

Ms. Bertram: Just a second, hon. member, I had things organized.

Leader of the Opposition: That's okay. Take your time.

Ms. Bertram: We have a document that was done in September of last year on our new model of care, and we do have pilot -

Leader of the Opposition: Is this the one that Corpus Sanchez is done to?

Ms. Bertram: It was in reply, or it was out of the Corpus Sanchez report that talked about different areas within our system, and how to make it more effective, and the delivery of service. I guess there are valuable showcase units that aren't quite launched yet, but we have one, Wedgewood. We have one -

Leader of the Opposition: These are your pilots that you're referring to?

Ms. Bertram: They call them showcase units.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Ms. Bertram: But if you want to call them models, that's fine.

Leader of the Opposition: This is with different scope of practice -

Ms. Bertram: Exactly, whether it's LPNs

being able to dispense medications, whether it's - I believe at the PCH we have at the emerg, we have also a model at QEH, and there's one also in Montague, as well. So those are showcase areas that are demonstrating those areas of model of care that was to respond to the Corpus Sanchez report. Again, those health professionals working collaboratively together to realize it.

Leader of the Opposition: In terms of Corpus Sanchez, one of the areas that they seem to have been very brief with the details on, I guess, is the type of standards and health outcomes that people expect. I'm curious. At any of our hospitals on PEI, are they practising the 100,000 Lives Campaign?

Ms. Bertram: Are they practising - sorry?

Leader of the Opposition: It's called the 100,000 Lives Campaign, to help people live longer. Usually within any hospital there's an overall philosophy behind what they're attempting to deliver to the people. I'm curious. I know Corpus Sanchez cost a lot of money, but it would be your government that would come together in terms of what policies. What are your principles and what are your beliefs of health for PEI before you turn it over to the health authority to deliver?

Ms. Bertram: I think that's what important. If you look at strategic things that we want to accomplish, whether it's your quality equity or efficiency or -

Leader of the Opposition: On the quality one, what type of evaluation tool are you going to have in place, and what are you going to measure, and what is being measured right now?

Ms. Bertram: Things that we're using as indicators, under quality, we are going to -

our objective is to reduce unplanned re-admissions for the same condition.

Leader of the Opposition: So what data system, and how do you decide what is a unnecessary admission? Is that consistent in all your facilities across PEI?

Ms. Bertram: Again, we will be working with health professionals. We will be working with those individuals that are on the front line and information systems that give us that information.

Leader of the Opposition: For example, at QEH, how many admissions are inappropriate compared to Prince County, and what's the reason? Last week you and I talked about the 19 beds in emergency that are bring used for admissions rather than emergency. So you can imagine, if the Chair got really sick and went into emergency and someone else was there for another reason and has a disease that's full of infection and can transmit - I'm curious what types of tools -

Ms. Bertram: I think what's important is that we turn no one away.

Leader of the Opposition: - you're using. I recognize you turn no one away. What, I guess, are the types of evaluation tools that you have in the system to ensure the outcome of good health?

Ms. Bertram: I guess that's what we're saying is that we're putting deliverables in the system.

Leader of the Opposition: But there must a deliverable now right? I mean -

Ms. Bertram: We're looking at the statistics. Length of stay, for example.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Ms. Bertram: Think length of stay. The average length of stay in our acute and long-term facilities. We're using that.

Leader of the Opposition: So with the length of stay, do you have a best practice model, like a rapid response team, in practice for the QEH or Prince Country?

Ms. Bertram: We're using, I understand, as Canadian standards, Canadian averages.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure, but in terms of the model? For example, if someone is in the ICU, or another part of the hospital - because I understand you still have respiratory technicians that are short - and if someone gets really ill quickly, do you have a rapid response team? Someone to go in and make a quick diagnosis and then do intervention really quickly and get that patient stabilized so that they don't go into cardiac arrest or whatever.

Ms. Bertram: Again, that's the front line service. That's happening, hon. member.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Do we have -

Ms. Bertram: We use the CIHI - the stats with CIHI - to compare our length of stay compared to the national averages. We have a much longer length of stay in our acute facilities compared to national stats.

That's what we're working on. When you talked the other day about the QEH or whatever facility we were discussing, or long-term care, when we look at our days of stay versus national stats, we're above that.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. But, for the reason - what tool are you using and how are you evaluating that we are keeping people in acute care longer?

Ms. Bertram: Minute detail. I'll have to

come back with more information for you. I know we'll be here another day with our budget, so we can bring that information back.

Leader of the Opposition: But again, going back to the policy. What exactly are you wanting to provide to the people of PEI through health from your department and what are the policies that you're turning over to the health board to say to deliver? For example, are you expecting two hospitals and only two acute hospitals in the province? Are you expecting three? There's lots of -

Ms. Bertram: Today, hon. member, you can see before you a budget that's been presented. You can see where we're valuing an integrated health care system. You can see every budget line that's been presented. We probably could have presented a budget much different in that book, because it is a Crown corporation, but we valued in showing and demonstrating to the public each line item within Health PEI.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure.

Ms. Bertram: But we're not trying to change - it's just that with have a health board now. We have a health authority. We have a department. I'm excited. As a department, we are now linked with wellness. That's a whole policy initiative that I think we need to grow in. We need to reduce our chronic illness rates in Prince Edward Island. We need to reduce childhood obesity rates in Prince Edward Island. Now, having health linked with wellness, our sport and recreation division - along with what has happened, and good things have happened with the Healthy Eating Strategy - all those other positive things and partners within health employees.

Now we have a sport and recreation division paired up with whether it be the public

health nurses, whether it be the chief medical office. We have a great partnership now that we have to move in that direction. We won't tackle chronic illness. We, at the front end, are supporting our youth and getting our activity rates up for children. We have committed, as ministers across this country, to ensure that we are going to make great improvements over the next two to three years with our activity rates for our kids. Especially from the 4:00 to 6:00 in the afternoon time frame. That's what we see as the potential time to really see activity rates go up. If we don't tackle that and do something, we're never going to tackle chronic illness in this province.

Leader of the Opposition: You know -

Chair: Just one question, and then I'll go to Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. I think people agree with the notion that we need a wellness model, but my question is more in terms of before you turn over to the health authority - and I recognize that you have some details in this budget for this year. But the health authority, once they take over, they are run by a governance model. They are able to make decisions. My question is: What's the expectation of your government for health services the next three to five years? Not only have you given them the authority, but you're also giving them the budget.

Ms. Bertram: That's a good - it's a fair question, because -

Leader of the Opposition: So where are you going?

Ms. Bertram: - I think it's going to be delivered. Before that authority is passed over they'll have a strategic plan to operate within. Okay? A strategic plan.

Leader of the Opposition: But for them, for the health authority, they can respond with a strategic plan, but it's up to government to drive the agenda. Whatever your policy is.

Ms. Bertram: Very much so, and policy will be set.

Leader of the Opposition: So what is the policy for the next three to five years in health? I guess that's what I'm asking.

Ms. Bertram: But I think we've been very consistent. Our policy is an integrated health care system in Prince Edward Island. It is utilizing all our wonderful health care professionals to the full scope of practice. It is making efficiencies in the system. It's ensuring equity in the system.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Just on the efficiency in the system.

Chair: Stop -

Leader of the Opposition: Sorry.

Chair: You can let the minister finish -

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, I'll come back to that.

Chair: - and write down your thought there.

Ms. Bertram: Those are all key areas that we need to ensure, and that the quality exists within our system. We have a great opportunity as a jurisdiction because we are a smaller province, and we can show our stats in a very real way here. I go back to that policy on chronic illness. If we can improve, as a province, our activity levels with our kids, and see activity rates go up and chronic illness go down, that's great if policy is there to support that.

With the legislation with Health PEI, the

authority will be passed over, in terms of operations, to the CEO, to the board, to Leo Stevens, when I feel that they're in their role as members. I don't think it's fair to do it right now, but over the next couple of months, when they are prepared and ready, we will do that. They will be carrying the torch of policy that government sets.

I think I've been very clear. We are using the Corpus Sanchez as our guiding document. We are using that, whether it be long-term care, whether it be our acute care facilities, whether it be looking at our community hospitals. All of those things, as an integrated health care system.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure.

Chair: One follow up and then I'll go.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure.

Corpus Sanchez. In that report it talked about high standards for good health outcomes, but it wasn't very specific. I've been told that, right now at the QEH, there are some areas that have measurement tools, and there are many areas that there are no measurement tools.

My question: Over the next three or four months, what is your department of health going to do to work on the policies? To work on the expectations when you actually turn it over to the health authority to deliver?

You had made the comment: inefficiencies in the system.

Ms. Bertram: But I think what's important there, hon. member, it's the idea of us working together as a system. If you're at the QEH, you're from West Prince, you need to rehabilitate - it's important that our system is working effectively to say: You can go up to your community, you can be

transferred and go up to Alberton, or whether it be O'Leary or whether it be Tyne Valley, to do that rehabilitation, other than being at the QEH.

That's what we have to work as a system together - or - same thing as Kings County - that someone can go to Souris, someone can be in Kings County and convalesce there.

Leader of the Opposition: So the question then is: Do you picture the QEH to be the acute care facility and Alberton, instead of offering as a hospital, becomes a rehab unit? That's the whole point in terms of what are the policies. What is the vision of your government for health for the next three to five years for the Province of PEI.

Ms. Bertram: Again, with our strategic plan, that will be released.

Leader of the Opposition: This is for the department of health's strategic plan?

Ms. Bertram: We are operating today as it is today. When I feel that the board is confident enough to take on those responsibilities, it will be turned over to them, those operational issues.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, as minister, and under the legislation, I will be ultimately responsible for those final decisions -

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

Ms. Bertram: - operating within policy.

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

I'm sitting here listening to some of the comments regarding one Island, one community working together in partnership.

I'm just wondering. In the ambulances - and

you are going to use them in home care. Did you talk to the unions first before you made that announcement?

Ms. Bertram: I think, hon. member, what - I guess I responded a little bit to that. But I think the issue is that we are not at the stage to - it's in our budget this year. It will be a pilot that will get started in the fall, hopefully, but we're not there yet. It was just announced within the budget. I think if you look at the context of the budget speech, it's very high level. In due process they will be part of that conversation.

Mr. M. Currie: Did you meet with the unions yet?

Ms. Bertram: No, I have not.

Mr. M. Currie: Oh, you haven't?

Ms. Bertram: No.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: One of the questions, I guess, your government had made a statement and had suggested to the people in Prince County that they'd have a full hospital in O'Leary and one in Alberton. But then over the course of time decisions were made and changed on that. In Alberton right now they're still going through some changes. O'Leary, it seems like it's going to be a long-term care facility.

But the question is, coming back to - with your government right now, when you're working on the policy and you're working on your strategic plan, what are some of the principles that you're going to be working with staff under?

Ms. Bertram: I think, hon. member, we have been working very diligently since 2007 as a government. I think you have to roll the train back a little bit and you have to

look at some of the things that did take place in the system and there were pressure points that existed.

You can say what you want, that today is May 4th, 2010, but there were realities that human resources were taken out of the system back in 2005 with Program Renewal. We've had to put additional staffing place, regardless of whatever facility or level of care we're talking about. In 2003 there were different closures. Souris had temporary closures, 2004 there was again closures in Souris, 2004, Kings County, under your administration.

I'm not saying that was wrong or right, but there are realities that exist with health professionals and delivery of service. Right now with Kings County we have issues around ER nurses.

But we've been working diligently since 2007. We followed through with the Corpus Sanchez report and accepted those recommendations in that context. But we're working hard. I think it's very important that we value those front line individuals. When I visited Alberton, when I visited O'Leary, visited Souris, visited Tyne Valley, PCH, QEH, Kings County, there are very committed people at the front line.

Yes, there are challenges and we don't acknowledge that enough. Too often we hear the negative stories in health, and there's so much positive that is happening and the care that is given in our buildings and the care of one-on-one with patients to families.

Coming from an education side, health has been new to me. I have even a greater respect for health care professionals in this province.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, you indicated earlier that Tracey is now your deputy?

Ms. Bertram: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: Where's Keith gone?

Ms. Bertram: Keith is the CEO of Health PEI.

Mr. M. Currie: He's gone over with the other group?

Ms. Bertram: With Health PEI, with the operations.

Mr. M. Currie: With Leo and them?

Ms. Bertram: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: Leo Stevens. Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Just going back to, again, where government's trying to take health, especially our acute care facilities in the province. A few minutes ago we were talking about the difference, the change from 2007 to 2008 in terms of what the vision was for O'Leary and Alberton. I know you refer to Corpus Sanchez. One of the areas in that particular model that they talk a lot about is high standards and outcomes, but they don't talk specifically what type of measurement tools they're using and how they're doing evaluations.

So I guess my question is: Right now, is there a baseline from Alberton to Souris to Prince County to the QEH and what's that baseline when it comes to healthy outcomes? I know you made the comment, the longer we keep people in our acute care facilities and the national average. How do we know that?

Ms. Bertram: If you look at this section of

the budget, epidemiology, that whole area is sort of a new direction that we've taken and that is speciality around that collection of data. "Appropriations provided to monitor and report to the public on health status and trends in the Province and to support evidence-based decisions and continuous improvement throughout our Health system."

So that whole division is supporting that to help all of us, this decision making.

Leader of the Opposition: So on that, just as an example, we were talking a little while ago about ambulances and emergency or ERs. When you look at the QEH -

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Chair: The hour has been called.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Thank you, minister.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

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

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Motions Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, we'll call on Motion No. 63.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 63.

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

WHEREAS during the past century, hundreds of thousands of girls have benefitted from Girl Guides of Canada - Guides du Canada through learning new skills, developing lasting friendships, building confidence and leadership abilities, and learning about the world around them;

AND WHEREAS Guiding provides girls the opportunity to take action on the issues they care about and to be responsible world citizens;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly recognize the Girl Guides of Canada - Guides du Canada organization, and its administrators, members and dedicated volunteers, for their success and valued contributions throughout the past century.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition to open debate on the motion.

Do you require the podium?

Leader of the Opposition: No, I'm fine. Thank you. I just wanted to say we have some guests with us tonight, Vicki Bryanton and Emma-Lee Arsenault are with us, and I believe Lori is with us as well.

Originally when we decided to put this motion on the floor, as you know there was going to be youth parliament sponsored by Girl Guides of Prince Edward Island. Unfortunately that had to be cancelled but we wanted to celebrate the great work this organization does anyway.

It gives me great pleasure to bring forward opposition's motion in celebration of the Girl Guides of Canada. Before I discuss the many benefits of guiding, I would like to briefly touch on the history of guiding in Prince Edward Island, which has been gathered from an early publication, *A History of Guiding on Prince Edward Island*, written by Jessie R. Fullerton in 1967.

A young theology student named Mr. Harry Morris started a small Guide company in 1913. The group was sponsored by Saint Peter's Anglican Church in Charlottetown, but unfortunately disbanded when Mr. Morris went overseas. Several attempts were made in the early 1910s to structure a guiding company through the support of the Catholic Women's League, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and many other organizations.

I was interested to learn that many of these attempts did not succeed out of fear that the weekly meetings would interfere with schoolwork. Other concerns included access to limited financial resources and a lack of trained guiding leaders. The first registered guide company was established in 1923 and sponsored by the women's Catholic league. There were forty members in six patrols. The first Charlottetown Girl Guide company was at St. Dunstan's. The second company was established in 1924, and another in 1925. Unfortunately, these early companies lasted only a year or two.

In 1931, the first company outside of Charlottetown was established in Montague,

with Mrs. Reverend H.R. Gibson and Mrs. Herbert Poole. Mrs. Gibson moved away but Mrs. Poole remained. The company was noted to be still active at the time of writing, and that was back in 1967.

Despite all this early activity it wasn't until 1934 that the Girl Guides of PEI was formally established with the help of Mona Wilson. Mona Wilson was the first provincial commissioner, first secretary treasurer, and first chair of awards. She worked on practically all committees. She was active from 1934 to 1962, except for the time she was in Newfoundland as commissioner of the Canadian Red Cross. Since Ms. Wilson's appointment, there have been 16 provincial commissioners.

In 1970, the dream of a provincial campsite for Rangers, Guides and Brownies became a reality when Dr. Dorothy Bentley, of Montreal, deeded 74 acres of land in Kings County to be used as the Girl Guide camp on Prince Edward Island. Many girls and Guiders from across the province have enjoyed their outdoor camping experiences at the beautiful Camp Fairhaven in the eastern end of the province.

With the support of Scouts Canada, the PEI Girl Guide headquarters has found its home at 100 Upper Prince Street in Charlottetown. Camp Fairhaven is owned and operated by the PEI council. Guiding members from across Canada and around the world are welcome at Camp Fairhaven. Non-guiding groups can also be accommodated if the space is free at the time. It's open for camping from mid-May to late October annually. Girls can come to Camp Fairhaven with their unit district or attend a provincial camp event.

Each summer, provincial camping opportunities are made available to members and their friends. It's also open to non-guiding groups, church groups, not-for-

profit. They're encouraged to consider Fairhaven as an alternative for a youth group meeting or retreat.

Nationally, Girl Guides of Canada have impacted on the lives of girls and women since 1910. As Canada's largest organization for girls and women, guiding has long contributed to success among girls and women by providing opportunities for fun, friendship, adventures, personal and leadership development, role models for girls and community involvement. Today, over 167,000 girls throughout Canada benefit from the programs offered by this national movement. Girls and guiders, ages five and up, meet weekly and participate in challenges, service projects, and learn new and exciting life skills such as leadership, self-awareness and teamwork.

In addition to the development of our youth, our communities also benefit from the skills that the Girl Guides gives to its members. Many great Canadians have participated in and benefited from the Girl Guides organizations. Roberta Bondar, Canada's first woman astronaut, and Kathy Kreiner, Olympic gold medal skier, are two of the many well known graduates of the Girl Guides movement.

Guiding is changing with the times to reflect the needs and interests of today's girls and women. It empowers girls and women to face challenges with confidence. Through guiding activity choices, girls are empowered to reach their potential, to be independent, confident and caring as they learn to develop decision making and life skills. Guiding helps them connect with their community and with the wider world. Guiding today addresses the pressures that modern girls face by teaching them exciting skills in a safe environment.

The girl guiding organization believes that when girls feel that they are good at

something they are more likely to feel good about themselves. In guiding programs across Canada girls are learning, among other skills, how to camp, horseback ride, snowboard, advocate for the environment, plant trees, enjoy the outdoors, cook over a campfire, to sail, to sing, to act, to dance, design and create clothing, take digital photographs, bake, baby sit, perform basic self-defence moves, to stargaze, to use computers and to investigate the areas of science and technology, to name a few.

Their activity-based, flexible programs are appealing to girls with varying interests. They do a little bit of everything. Adult members are women who are supported and trained to provide mentorship and act as role models. They encourage girls to speak up and be leaders in their communities and schools. For women, guiding is a chance to meet others and to make a difference.

Guiding also provides opportunities for international travel, scholarships for those pursuing post-secondary education. It is open to everyone - girls, women, young and young-at-heart, those with daughters in the organization and without.

Guiding offers for girls, age five to 17 years, a place to have fun, learn new things and make new friends. Guiding is always open. An individual can join at any time of year. It's challenging, adventurous, activity-based programs. They have an accepting and nurturing atmosphere. Scholarships and international travel is what attracts many people to guiding.

For women 18 or 19 years and over, it's a chance to make a difference in the lives of a girl or a young woman and to experience the reward of helping a girl or a young woman develop her potential. A place to laugh and have fun with new and old friends. Opportunities for personal growth, peer support and travel. It also provides

mentoring opportunities, access to organized training and activity programs, pre-planned events for women and girls.

Volunteers contribute what they can when they can. For example, some may work directly with girls or contribute in other ways, from corporate skills, such as organizational development, finance, PR marketing, fund development training to community networking and other related fields.

Girls interested in joining may join at any time with the organization. I believe currently there's a registration fee, \$110 per year for girls and \$65 for adults. The fee covers insurance, program development, training for leaders and more. If someone is unable to afford the registration fee there's a number of options available. Canadian Tire Jumpstart® program also helps cover the registration fees for Girl Guides. The organization says that no individual is ever turned away due to an inability to pay the registration fee.

Before closing, I would like to share a few special anecdotes provided by the provincial commissioner, Michelle MacDonald. Michelle was away tonight or she would have been with us. Lord and Lady Baden-Powell and their daughters, the hon. Heather and the hon. Betty, visited PEI. in July 1935. Apparently the guiding members on PEI were quite nerve-wracked. Lady Baden-Powell wrote a letter to Mona Wilson after the visit that read, in part, and I quote:

It must have been alarming having us when you did not know what we would be like. But now you know that we have the fullest sympathy for all that you are doing and just love to see how things are going, not from any thought of criticism but purely with the idea of backing you up, bucking you up, in the magnificent work you are doing for the game we all love so well.

PEI guiding members took part in four historical royal visits in 1939, 1951, 1959 and 1964. In 1959 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II presented two Guides and a Ranger with the gold cords at a rally at the coliseum here in Charlottetown. In 1983 Prince Charles and Princess Diana visited Montague and the members of the 1st Montague Brownie Pack assembled bouquets for the Princess.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Girl Guides of Canada for their valuable contribution to our nation, our province and our communities throughout the past century. I would like to especially recognize our provincial commissioner, Michelle MacDonald, for the PEI Girl Guides administration and staff and for all the girls and women, past and present, who've been a part of this great organization.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir to second the motion.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I can say, right from the beginning, that, no, I was never a Girl Guide, contrary to what other members seem to think.

It gives me great pleasure to second this motion tonight, and in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of Girl Guides of Canada.

The first registered unit of Girl Guides in Prince Edward Island was in 1913, although scattered units existed in Prince County, of which no records exist. Today there are approximately 450 members, girls and adults, from across the province. Nationally, there are about 90,000 members, girls and adult members. Any female aged 5 and up is eligible to become a member. Some dedicated members have been in the

organization for over 50 years.

The Girl Guides of Canada is a valuable organization. The programs offer opportunities for girls to gain knowledge and skills in areas such as the environment, service to their community, relationships with others, self confidence, being active and physical activities. As well, they can explore dance, the arts, movies, sciences, and physical challenges like boating, camping, trekking, geocaching, and more.

What they do in their unit depends on the interests of the girls involved. They can also work on challenges independently. The girls are mentored in a confident, resourceful and courageous way. The object is to make a difference in the world. It is all about empowering girls to learn leadership skills, to explore their potential, to make friends and, of course, have fun.

The programs are flexible: the Sparks, age 5 to 6; the Brownies, 7 and 8; the Guides, 9 to 11; Pathfinders, from 12 to 14; the Rangers, from 15 to 17; and the adult members, age 18 and up. As girls get older, they play a larger role in planning their activities and programs. They can earn badges, set goals and learn how to plan and organize. Adult members can be guiders, trainers, committee members, and council members. They can be district commissioners, and assist guiders in their areas. They can also be mentors, help plan activities, run events, plan and run camps, and do a whole host of other things. Adults can also be members, just to support the organization, without being a guider or playing a specific role.

Trefoil members are aged 30 and up, and they meet regularly. They plan activities and events for themselves, and they have fun as adult members, while also assisting the organization when they can. Link members are members 18 to 30 who wish to stay connected to Guiding but do not wish to be a

unit guide or hold a specific position. Again, they get together and have fun as adult members. The organization also offers training opportunities for adult members in areas such as diversity, conflict management, camping skills, first aid, and a whole host of enrichment training.

There was to be a girls' parliament held in the Legislature from May 6th to 9th, and that was with the support of the provincial Interministerial Women's Secretariat and the Coalition for Women in Government. That seems to have gone off the rails this past little while, but I kind of wish that would have taken place because it would have been a great event for them. The girls from 14 to 18 were planning on having public speaking and debating on the floor of this Legislature, and learn how to debate and leadership skills and have fun at the spa and a dance, among other activities. So they're missing out on this weekend that they had planned. It's too bad because it would have been great to see individuals be involved like that. It is my understanding that the event just got cancelled recently, and that's too bad, because I'm sure they were looking forward to it.

The Girl Guides also have a provincial camp, Camp Fairhaven, located in Point Pleasant, just outside of Murray River. Units from across the province, and even across the country, camp at this great facility from May to October, and they hold provincial camps every summer in July or August. This year, a provincial Spark Brownie birthday camp celebrating the 100th anniversary will be held in late June.

The Girl Guides organization has received assistance from the EDA program to hire maintenance people to help out the few weeks in the summer, or sometimes a student program under the EDA to help run programs. In the past, a few times they have received funding from the students under the

federal program. We do believe that this is a good program, and wherever we can assist them in making things operate and run smoothly - it's a great organization and we should be there to help them wherever we can.

However, it is my understanding that they receive a provincial grant. Though they do not have to pay taxes on their camp property, which is another good area where government has been able to help out. According to Girl Guide organizations, this support is essential, for if they had to pay taxes on the camp property they would be forced to close, because they don't have that type of money. With this in mind, I encourage government to continue this support, which I'm sure they're going to because they have in the past. Most governments all the way along have always helped this great organization. Especially as the income from camp rentals to their members just covers the costs of running the camp. They need assistance and we've been there before. I'm sure we'll be there again in the future.

In addition to a large international camp being held in Guelph, Ontario this year, there are lots of special events planned for the 100th anniversary centennial. May 15th of this year is National Rally Day. Rallies will be held in every province across Canada the same day to celebrate their 100th anniversary. They gave gift baskets to the first baby born this year at the Prince County Hospital and also at the QEH. As well, they are planning to have several communities plant flower beds commemorating the anniversary. There is also going to be a stamp to be released from Canada Post in July for this event. The organization has got their homework done and they're making this a year to remember.

As an organization, the Girl Guides claim that their biggest challenge provincially, in

recent years, has been twofold: financial and human resources. That's always a challenge for volunteer and organization groups. Financial problems seem to always be there, and there's always a constant drain to look at trying to raise funds for operation.

In the past two years, commissioner Michelle MacDonald has led the organization through a big restructuring provincially to realign their provincial council to make it more efficient and to better work to support the guiders. Adult members are often very busy within their communities volunteering for other things as well. The organization is working to make sure guiders are well supported with the tools and resources they need to offer excellent programs.

The new structure went into place last May and, although it has been a year of transition, Michelle MacDonald believes it appears to be working well. To support members, who are all volunteers, the organization has one paid staff member who works in the office year round doing bookkeeping, administrative tasks and other tasks as time permits. The organization has received 4,000 miscellaneous operating grants from the province for the last number of years, although they claim it's not enough, but I know governments are doing the best they can to support this organization and we're glad to see that they are getting some support. If there was any more available to help them they'd, I'm sure, appreciate that too.

Also this year, they received an intern under the Skills PEI program for 6 months. They have been getting some staff help to help out the organization. In the past several years the organization has received funding for EDA for a membership field worker, for 12 weeks or so each year, who assists with recruiting new guiders and getting units set up. Again, government has been there to

help them get this program up and going and to make sure that it continues.

As their membership is made up of volunteers they need paid staff to help in making this program work. Although they have received funding in the past through EDA, the organization says it is never certain and makes planning difficult, as they never know for sure to what extent the financing or funding that they will receive. It makes it a little difficult when you're planning, trying to operate for the coming year when you're waiting for approvals, but I'm sure, as in the past, that government will be there to help.

Two years ago they received no funding to hire camp staff, and the organization claimed their ability to hold provincial camps was severely impaired. They've gone through where they haven't gotten some funding and they found out really how difficult it is. I'm sure that this is going to be back to normal again for them. We'll make sure - we'll keep lobbying on that behalf. The organization claims that if they could be in the position of having additional resources each year so they could hire a second staff person, they would be able to recruit more guiders, open more units and support more girls in Prince Edward Island.

In closing, I would like to extend my congratulations to the Girl Guides organization on reaching this special milestone. I also wish to acknowledge their long-standing dedication and their valued contributions from previous provincial commissioners to present commissioner Michelle MacDonald, the administration and staff, leaders, members past and present, and of course, the Girl Guides themselves.

I urge the provincial government not to turn its back on this organization in light of its modern-day challenges. I urge government to commit to ongoing support for the Girl

Guides across the province. I look forward to unanimous consent from the House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Sherry: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity to stand in support of this motion this evening. I guess I should start off by saying that I was a Brownie for a couple of years and flew up to the Guide program. So I do recognize some of the benefits of the program.

Over the past century, many Island girls have benefitted from the guidance of this organization. Girl Guides of Canada continue to represent what it has always stood for, which was fun, friendship and adventure. Girl Guides provide the safe, accepting environment with diverse and exciting programs and activities for girls.

Girls Guides of Canada has been a part of the Island landscape for many decades. Even if you haven't been a member of the many branches, such as Sparks, Brownies, Guides, Pathfinders or Rangers, I'm sure that everyone here and across the Island has enjoyed their cookies over the years, or has visited the beautiful Camp Fairhaven on the shores of Murray River.

What I find unique about the Girls Guides Association is that even though Guides have been around since 1910, they have been able to keep pace with the world around them. Some of the badges and challenges girls work on today include career awareness, saving water, fashion, eating local, culture awareness, inventing, money talk and business communications.

Being involved with guiding is a great benefit to both girls and women. For girls, guiding provides the opportunity to discover new interests, learn valuable leadership skills and make long-lasting friendships. For women, guiding provides a mentoring opportunity to help girls in your community develop their potential.

The mission of Girls Guides of Canada is to enable girls to be confident, resourceful and courageous and to make a difference in the world. According to their 2009 to 2012 strategic plan, the number one strategic priority for Girls Guides of Canada is to enable girls to develop leadership and life skills through self-development, challenge and adventure. This will enable girls to help improve their communities, their country and the world and to provide inspiration to others.

I'm proud to say that this government, through the Interministerial Women's Secretariat, is assisting the Girls Guides of Prince Edward Island with this priority. The Interministerial Women's Secretariat has provided funds for the Girls Guides of this province to have a youth parliament that will take place this fall. In addition to debating sessions in the Legislature, there will be a number of skill-building opportunities, presentations by women leaders in the province, as well as providing a safe and fun weekend for the girls.

I personally look forward to participating in the upcoming event as a number of other MLAs here in the House, as well as the Leader of the Opposition.

In closing, I heartedly support this motion to recognize this great organization, its administrators, members and dedicated volunteers for their success and valued contributions throughout the past century.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to

this motion this evening, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, like the Member from Montague-Kilmuir, was not in the Brownies, I want to make that clear, though my nickname is 'Brownie.'

These are great organizations. I will be supporting the resolution because I think it's important. I, myself, used to be - my sisters probably were in the Girls Guides, too. But I will speak from the Boy Scout end and the experiences there. It would go with the Girls Guides also. These are great organizations. It allowed an opportunity for people, especially in the downtown Charlottetown area when I was growing up, to get outside the city, out to the camping ground areas and things like that. Out to rural PEI and see what it was.

I used to remember my father taking us three boys to Camp Buchanan. His smile got bigger the closer to Camp Buchanan he got. On a two-week camp he used -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) rid of you for the summer.

Mr. Brown: Get rid of us. He tried a number of times, but the camp leaders would always call and he'd have to come down and pick us up before the end (Indistinct).

But I'll be supporting the resolution. I think it's a very important organization and any support that government can give - we should be looking at supporting this organization. A number of young people nowadays have tremendous pressure on them to do numerous other things, sports, a

tremendous amount of activities in sports, video games, just staying at home watching television.

So the pressure is there, and anything we can do to help the Girls Guides and the Boy Scouts of Canada to increase their numbers and to get more people out into the wilderness and to see our environment, it's better to train our young people in the environment that way. It's no better way for people to get out and experience it and to see what they can do, and all the badges you can get. I guess my sash was full to the top with good deed badges.

Madam Speaker, I'll be supporting the motion, and I hope all of us do.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm certainly proud to rise in support of this motion. When I was a young girl, unfortunately where I lived we didn't have the guiding or Brownie program. As a young mother with two daughters, when they were growing up I became involved with the First Ellerslie Brownie Pack and moved on to Guides as my daughters moved on. Subsequent to that, I became the district commissioner for Ellerslie Girls Guides.

I want to recognize the contribution also, as a mentor to me - the commissioner prior to me was Vivian Phillips from Freeland. There was nothing - the Girls Guide leaders loved getting together at Christmas time at her house because she's a fantastic cook and we're still blessed to have her with us in our community. She made an indelible mark on our leaders. Certainly as me to step up as commissioner.

I know the programs that we ran with our young girls - and I'm thinking back to some of the young girls in our area that now I meet them, they're leaders in the community or they've gone on and received a high level of education. It's kind of a joke now: You were my Girls Guide leader or whatever.

During that time we'd get together with other Girls Guide troops and have rallies, go camping. We spent lots of nights up at Camp Kildare and we also travelled down to Riverdale. So that was a good experience because our girls got to meet - whether it was the Summerside Brownie Pack, maybe you were there. Right now in the Ellerslie area the Girls Guides are not operating. I know St. Eleanors has a very active Girls Guiding program.

I was very pleased when I was at the home show in Summerside a couple of weekends ago, the Girls Guides were out selling their cookies. That was always a big event every spring with out Girls Guide pack. I must say, I'm partial to the chocolate and the vanilla, as opposed to the mint ones. So I'm glad they've gone back to that. But it brings back good memories to me to the time that we used to go out with our daughters door to door and our girls in the area doing that.

One of the highlights when I was involved, as well as a leader, was the opportunity to meet Lady Diana when she and Prince Charles came to Summerside. The Girl Guides got first row placement so we did get to meet her and give her a little memento, a little PEI Girl Guiding pen, it was in the shape of our flower. But it has made a mark on me and I always - I know the program is an excellent program and it does leave leadership skills. I don't think maybe that we realize how important they are, the mark that we can make on a young girls life. I was very interested to see about the parliamentary process that was going to take place this weekend. I'm sure that will come

around and that there will be great experiences that those girls will take away from that.

So as someone who's involved in it, I never forget the experiences I had with my fellow leaders and the opportunity to meet others across PEI as we shared ideas and training and all the things that come with Guides.

I want to congratulate all those in the gallery today for continuing the tradition of guiding. As a member of government it would be a pet project of mine to ensure that that support is there, and I know that it is there. I will ensure that it remains there as long as I can.

Just again, thank the Leader of the Opposition for the motion and support it.

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

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's great that I think the motion is going to pass with great support. It's really about celebrating all the past and present accomplishments. But I'm sure the accomplishments of the future too.

So without further ado, Madam Speaker, I close off the debate.

Thank you.

Speaker: Hon. members, you've heard the debate on the motion.

Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Bagnall: I think we should have a standing vote because it was very eloquent -

Speaker: Hon. members, a standing vote has been requested.

Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please ring the bells and call the members?

[The bells were rung]

Speaker: For those of you in the gallery joining us tonight, when a standing vote has been requested, the members have five minutes to gather their members to come in for the vote. So, we'll have a little delay here until everybody is present for the vote. Then we'll have a standing vote by all of the members.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, I'd like to rise tonight to welcome to the gallery a former city councillor, Brendon McCloskey, who's joined us here this evening.

I believe he may be a constituent of District 9, so I'd like to welcome him here, and hope he enjoys the rest of the evening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Hon. members, you've heard the debate on the motion.

All those voting against the motion, please rise.

All those voting in favour of the motion, please rise.

Clerk: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, the hon. Government House Leader, the hon. Minister of Education and

Early Childhood Development and Attorney General, the hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture, the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier, the hon. Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour, the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Opposition House Leader, the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter, the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, the hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood and the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Speaker: Hon. members, the yeas have it, and it is unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, Madam Speaker, we call Motion No. 61.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 61.

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

WHEREAS Sir Andrew Macphail, of Orwell -- outstanding Canadian man of letters and author of the classic book, *The Master's Wife* -- left an outstanding personal legacy, worthy of celebration by Islanders;

AND WHEREAS the family homestead, a beautiful 140-acre property of mixed farmland and woods, was bequeathed by the Macphail family to the province, and the

house lovingly and beautifully restored over the past 20 years by a community organization called the Friends of Macphail;

AND WHEREAS the Friends of Macphail are no longer able to sustain the present arrangement with the province, which leaves them responsible for maintenance of the house, plus the payment of property taxes, insurance, and related costs;

AND WHEREAS the Friends of Macphail have produced a new proposal and vision for the Homestead, requesting provincial government support for a plan to transform the site into one which promotes sustainable agriculture and forestry, while investigating and celebrating the dynamics of nature;

AND WHEREAS a world-class research, demonstration, and extension site in sustainable, small-scale agriculture would be of enormous benefit as our province makes the transition from our present industrial agricultural model;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government consider increasing its support to the Friends of Macphail, along the lines outlined in the document "A Proposal Regarding Future Directions for the Sir Andrew Macphail Homestead";

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that priority be given to the development of the Macphail Homestead as a world-class site for research, demonstration and outreach in sustainable agriculture and forestry.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition, to open debate on the motion.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I rise tonight, we also have some more

guests with us here, Friends of Sir Andrew Macphail. Janice Whelan, who's actually the chairperson of this organization, was not available tonight. She's actually away, but I believe Harry Baglole is with us, as well as Don Patton and his wife Linda, and there may be some other board members that are here with us tonight, as well.

Very good. Can't see behind me.

It is my pleasure to bring forward opposition's motion urging government's support for this new vision and course of action being proposed by the Friends of Macphail, as they plan a dramatic new direction for the Macphail Homestead.

I hope, Madam Speaker, that you are one of the Islanders who has had the privilege of visiting the Macphail Homestead in Orwell in recent years. This is truly one of the Island's most precious places, a site rich in both human history and natural beauty.

Although it is located not far from Charlottetown and only a couple of kilometres from the Trans-Canada Highway, the Homestead is a quiet, secluded space, giving the impression of a quieter, less hectic time.

Perhaps this is the reason why the Homestead has become such a popular location for retreats and seminars - a place which provides the time and space for reflection, as well as the modern facilities to accommodate such gatherings.

There are two features, in particular, which mark the Macphail Homestead as a special place. One is the lovely and painstakingly-restored home of the great Islander, Sir Andrew Macphail, perhaps the best example we have in Prince Edward Island of a preserved farmhouse from the early part of the 19th-century. The other is the natural beauty of the woodland, and the walk along the stream running through some of the

finest old-growth pine-and-hemlock forest in the Province.

For the past 19 years, these woods have been cared for as part of the Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project.

I fear that we Islanders sometimes overlook or take for granted those features or attractions of our province which have the most characteristics. At the same time, we tend to go overboard for others, promoting and praising that which is already famous.

Thus we often pour money into pushing what I'll call the 'Anne phenomenon' and the North Shore while overlooking other noted cultural figures and areas. Prominent among the latter I'd include Andrew Macphail and the historic Orwell area.

Those of us born and raised in Prince Edward Island have grown up with "Anne," justly proud of the fact that Canada's most famous and widely-translated author is Lucy Maud Montgomery. While we all know about Anne of Green Gables - and I expect most of us have read the book or attended the musical or watched the story on film -- far fewer of us can boast of being acquainted with *The Master's Wife*, Macphail's greatest masterpiece, about growing up on a typical Island family-farm, in Orwell, in the latter part of the 19th century.

If no one has had a chance to read Macphail's book, it's called *The Master's Wife*. It's really an incredible piece of literature, but more important than that, too, is the fact that it really gives us an accurate picture of what it must have been like here, living in a place in Prince Edward Island, and again, celebrating probably our traditional way of life. When you read the book often what you'll get is just a sense of closeness of family, you'll get the sense of closeness of community, you'll get the sense

of almost being back there at a time when, as the book describes, a simpler time in our life.

Actually, about two months ago now, I was able to go down to Sir Andrew Macphail's, and even though the house was not open to the public, when you walk in you get the sense of presence, and you get that feeling of just celebration of some of the culture that would have taken place at the time, the beautiful property, and also the sense of the people that would have lived in the house. So I recommend that book if you haven't read it.

The Master's Wife was Macphail's greatest masterpiece about growing up in a typical family farm in Orwell in the latter part of the 19th century. Poet, environmentalist and essayist Dr. Pete Hay has called *The Master's Wife* one of the greatest books of place in world literature.

So far I've been speaking about Macphail as a great Islander. But he also was well-known in his own day as a great Canadian. He was McGill University's first professor of the History of Medicine. In addition, he was a literary figure, writing essays, poetry, drama, short stories, and a novel.

Historian Dr. Ian Ross Robertson, another noted Islander and the biographer of Macphail, states that Sir Andrew is the best example in Canadian literature of what he calls -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Hon. members, could we keep it down a bit so the people in the gallery could hear the speaker?

Thank you.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Historian Dr. Ian Ross Robertson, another noted Islander and biographer of Macphail, states that Sir Andrew is the best example in Canadian literature of what he calls the 'man of letters': the non-specialized writer who touches on many areas and writing in different literary forms.

But of particular relevance, Madam Speaker, in the motion the opposition is bringing forward at the present time, was Macphail's very strong advocacy of what we might call the traditional small farm.

For him, it was a backbone of the Canadian social and economic life, and of no place in Canada was more true than this in his native Prince Edward Island. He wrote about the farming tradition in *The Master's Wife*. He did more than that. During the summers which he spent on the family homestead in Orwell he carried out important field experiments in progressive agriculture, in the growing of seed potatoes and tobacco, destined to become an important Island crop of the 20th century.

This is part of the Macphail's legacy that I wish to stress. That in his own day, and on the very land which is now part of Macphail's Homestead, Macphail himself carried out important agricultural demonstration projects. I believe that this legacy of practical support to the Island farming industry and tradition is one of particular relevance at the present time as our agricultural industry faces its continuing crisis and the Macphail Homestead looks to a new direction, and new challenges - especially in that particular geographic area of the province.

We have a number of farmers that are organic farmers, and one of the big issues for an organic farmer often is to have modern practices that can be used following organic methods. The Macphail Homestead

could really help us move our traditional agriculture more towards this special area of farming and be a centre of excellence carrying out a number of trials so that we know the better varieties that we can actually grow that do not - maybe a little bit more frost resistant, maybe not as susceptible to pests, etc.

This just seems to be such a natural fit. I also would say that not only for organic farming, but also as we look and explore ideas of what kind of other forestry products that we can be using on a small scale, but making a little bit more on the commercial area for some of our people to even extend their income. Once again, Macphail's rises to the top.

So far, I've been speaking about the place and the man, about the homestead and about Sir Andrew Macphail. Now I wish to praise the wonderful work done by the remarkable voluntary group known as the Friends of Macphail. In the early 1960s the Macphail family donated the historic 140-acre homestead of Sir Andrew Macphail to the provincial government, which contractually agreed to honour the life and the work of Sir Andrew and to preserve the homestead. Also, government had other priorities and little was done. But by the late 1980s the house was about to collapse into its own cellar. In 1988 the Friends of Macphail stepped forward and agreed to assume responsibility for repair and maintenance of the property.

Over a period of years, and with the help of a variety of government grants, the house and grounds were lovingly restored, and the site operated as an historic site, dedicated to the memory of Sir Andrew Macphail. Unfortunately, after 20 years of devoted volunteer labour and many accomplishments, the Friends of Macphail now find that they can no longer sustain the responsibility of maintaining the site. The

limited revenues brought in by visitors over the summer months are simply not sufficient to pay the taxes on the house and land, plus the insurance on the house, while at the same time supporting the ongoing maintenance of the 160-year-old house and grounds. In short, the Friends of Macphail require more government support if they are able to continue with their important work.

I maintain that volunteer groups - groups like the Friends of Macphail - are central to the cultural life of our province. Their autonomy of action is precious and the work they do invaluable. Moreover, I suggest that it is much more efficient for government to support such organizations than to assume direct responsibility for a community enterprise such as this.

Over the past several months the Friends of Macphail have been hard at work, through private meetings, public consultation, to come up with a fresh vision and new direction for the homestead. In doing so, they've sought to be true to what they call the spirit of Sir Andrew Macphail - to make the interpretative work at the Homestead relevant to the present and future, as well as to the past. They wish to do this by engaging directly with the ongoing economic and cultural life of the Island. The new vision for the homestead is outlined in a document called: A Proposal Regarding Future Directions for the Sir Andrew Macphail Homestead, dated March 18, 2010.

This proposal was submitted to the Minister of Tourism and Culture - and I look forward to hearing him speak tonight - on March 18th, 2010. In the proposal it gives a background that the Sir Andrew Macphail foundation had recently completed an in-depth review of existing function and mandate and sought ideas on how to preserve and operate our heritage property in the 21st century in Prince Edward Island.

Over the past two months they met, consulted with and listened to the local community and other potential stakeholders. They had professional and financial assistance from Dr. David Keenlyside and the PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation. They were able to also access the services of Jill Lightwood to act as a facilitator for their process. Despite the admirable efforts of the past directors of the foundation and various provincial governments, and the support of local and provincial community, the Sir Andrew Macphail Homestead continued to be in financial difficulty.

The efforts and focus of the past 19 years have been remarkably consistent, and there was no logical reason to assume that maintaining the current focus would change the economic outlook. As a result, the foundation believed there needed to be a fundamental change in the operation of the homestead, and its focus should reflect our changing times and current issues.

Once again, we often hear about government talking about the amount of dollars that they have with the stimulus package from the federal government, and their own dollars as they're trying to stimulate the economy and make sure that we stay out of recession. Here's a tremendous opportunity that some of those stimulus dollars could be used on the homestead to make sure that it's upgraded and in great shape, at the same time investing in an area of the province that also needs a little help.

Sir Andrew Macphail was an innovator, a researcher, an educator and a gentleman with a strong social conscience and a vision for his community. The board of directors was strongly encouraged by all those who participated in that workshop to ensure the spirit of Sir Andrew Macphail be maintained as they wanted to move forward.

The following proposal involves significant

change in focus and direction. Their future goals embrace the need for innovation, education and public engagement, while preserving and recognizing the property's historical significance. I know both ACOA and the provincial tourism department are always talking about opportunities around culture and historical and destination tourism. Again, if you could think of this beautiful facility, you can imagine the types of events that could be held at the homestead.

I know the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, whose mandate, in some of the areas, is to increase innovation and also the research capabilities in the province - well, by investing in Sir Andrew Macphail, this is an opportunity for the province to participate in applied research, rather than maybe just investing in research that sometimes is done more from an academic perspective. This is a tremendous opportunity to do something different here, and at the same time support and invest in the community for years to come. The knowledge that would come out of such an applied research opportunity, especially in the area of agriculture, would really be a gift and investment in the whole province.

The proposal moves the site from being a stagnant museum with inanimate artifacts to a property that celebrates and investigates the dynamics of nature. It will provide local people, as well as tourists, with an opportunity to explore the changing world we live in, and the natural challenges that we face.

In here, I've spoken in the past about an economist by the name of Jeff Rubin, who's done a great piece of work and a book called *Why Your World Is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller*. He compares the oil and globalization, and at the same time he talks about what the world was like when globalization was able to happen. He also

talks about what the world's not going to be like when we no longer have a cheap oil supply. He describes wonderfully about opportunities around agriculture in the future, but he also describes tourism opportunities in the future. He talks about the need to have really - we're probably going back in time to people that would be participating from other provinces and their tourism products, and from across Canada and maybe the eastern seaboard. Rather than, as you know, our tourism product for a long time has been so global.

Once again, Sir Andrew Macphail, this is a real opportunity for government to invest in a really good project. The proposed multi-project facility will expand to include an eco-centre component that can be used as a demonstration site and provide opportunities for the establishment of multi-partnerships in forestry, sustainable agriculture, energy and natural history, all enhanced on the site's original culture and heritage.

The group went further to say that they wanted to do their project in two phases. The first phase was a transition and planning phase, which they wanted to start immediately, to lead to the implementation of a new business model with a new lease agreement and a new operating structure for this coming summer of 2010.

The homestead normally opens for its regular season in May. Without, however, immediate infusion of funds, proposed in phase one, the site would be unable to operate in any capacity for the summer season. It's a situation - the foundation's ability to generate income to cover basic costs, such as utilities, provide local employment opportunities, and showcase such a cultural gem of historical significance would be lost.

You can see the great work that friends have done. They have submitted this proposal

back in March to the province and we look forward to the province investing in the vision of Sir Andrew Macphail's project. Again, in phase two especially of the homestead, under the new business model, it's really interesting what vision this community group has. They would like to see the foundation change to their business model that focuses again on natural history, sustainable forestry and agriculture, energy innovation, education and community engagement, in addition to social and cultural heritage.

Like I mentioned earlier, over the years, look at the product that Lucy Maud Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables has become to the province. Here's an opportunity to make another real investment that will help the province grow in so many ways, not only from today, but for the future as well.

In the past, Sir Andrew Macphail Foundation and the Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project - that's very successful, and I think people recognize and probably have participated in the past in workshops, summer camps, etc. Again, the foundation sees the notion that they can take that product and really expand it.

The trail system is upgraded. They want it promoted for year-round use. The transition and planning phase will be used to assess the feasibility and sustainability of a variety of ecological offerings. The Macphail Homestead and Ecocentre will strive to regain its former organic certification. Again, not only for the forestry part, but all the trials, this has major significance as to how it could help grow our agriculture sector and also help our forestry sector in terms of sustainable practices. Again, if it becomes a centre of almost excellence in the area of applied research, it offers the notion that entrepreneurs from across PEI - if they're unsure or they want to learn a new

method or a new product - the foundation and the homestead would be able to go and learn the methods, would be able to see how things work, and then to be able to take that knowledge and turn it into a product.

The Foundation developed partnerships in sustainable agriculture, and they use the example of ACORN, PEI ADAPT Council, McGill Macdonald College, the University of Guelph, Nova Scotia Agricultural College. The Foundation will seek projects and partners to use the cleared 15 acres and some of the forest areas around the Homestead for demonstration projects and for permanent installations that will attract visitors and that will benefit other aspects of the operation.

Products from the property's gardens and orchards and from local producers will be used to create event-based dining experiences, workshops and educational opportunities. I know the department of tourism are really expanding upon food and on culinary tourism, so this particular project seems to fit in so many different areas of the present government's direction of where they're trying to take the province.

The Foundation develops partnerships in the areas of energy alternatives. It's true to the spirit of Sir Andrew Macphail. We believe the property could be used to demonstrate such things as alternative forms of energy, sustainable energy sources, energy conservation. Exhibits within the heritage-sensitive house would be of great interest to those striving to be more energy conscious in their own older homes.

I live in an older home myself. It's often you learn new ideas - small little changes you can make - anything to help reduce our carbon footprint. This is another area that it could be such a great opportunity for many people to learn new ways of being more innovative, on a practical basis, even in our

own homes. This could include the use of solar panels for heating and electrical generation, small wind turbines or electrical generation from the Orwell River.

Other options to investigate could include greener heating alternatives and more energy-efficient building materials such as insulation and double-paned windows. Opportunities to use the property as a demonstration site will not only attract visitors but also decrease the dependence on fossil fuels, be socially conscious about the carbon footprint and reduce operational costs.

I'm sure everybody in this room has read the Rural Development Action Plan, the direction that the province is planning on taking rural PEI. It talks about environmental consciousness, it talks about our carbon footprint. So again, Macphail seems to meet the goals of even what's in the rural development document. We look forward to hearing the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development speak perhaps about how this project could fit under that part of government as well.

The Foundation developed partnerships in ecological and environmental issues. The Natural History Society, the Island Nature Trust, ECO Prince Edward Island, Holland College's Environmental Applied Science Technology and Wildlife Conservation Technology programs, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, and private sector funding bodies such as the Mountain Equipment Co-op and Irving.

The property consists of approximately 140 acres, with only 15 occupied by the homestead and its surrounding cleared grounds. This open acreage can be used as a demonstration area for such projects as alternatives to high maintenance turf grass. I know last year there was an act brought in to limit the pesticide use in Prince Edward

Island. One of the areas, however, that pesticides are still used in heavy doses is actually in our golf courses. So it seems Macphail's could offer some solutions here, and could really help in the environmental area for the province, if a project like this would be invested in.

The acreage could be used as, again, a demonstration site for projects for alternatives to maintenance turf grass, composting, backyard vegetable gardens, landscaping using native and non-invasive species. The best ideas could be explored during the transition and planning phase, including the feasibility of establishing a botanic garden focusing with heritage plants and native flora. The forest and Orwell River will provide additional opportunities to showcase PEI's natural history and low-impact outdoor recreation. The multiple project facility could create fascinating teaching initiatives, workshops and lectures.

The Foundation develops partnerships in medical, social and cultural spheres to reflect Sir Andrew Macphail's accomplishments as a medical doctor, a writer, a federalist and an historian. Medical schools at Dalhousie and McGill, Canadian Medical Association, Veterans Affairs, writer groups, UPEI faculties of history and English, the Scottish Society - these partnerships will be used to develop workshops, educational events, offer readings and lectures, as well as provide a venue for meeting and conferences, musical and theatre.

This is just part of the highlights that I'll highlight from this proposal. It's a vision that the homestead - it's outlined, it's a great direction. I quote from the forward section of the document:

Therefore, although the following proposal involves significant change in focus and direction, we believe that our future goals

embrace the need for innovation, education and public engagement, while preserving and recognizing the property's historical significance. The proposal moves the site from being a museum with inanimate artefacts to a property that celebrates and investigates the dynamics of nature. It will provide local people, as well as tourists, with an opportunity to explore the changing world we live in and the natural challenges that we currently face.

In conclusion, we in the opposition urge government to consider providing the Friends of Macphail with the support necessary to enable them to embark with energy and confidence on this new direction, one in keeping with the community-engaged spirit of Sir Andrew Macphail. We look forward to having further discussion regarding this motion.

Madam Speaker, thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir to second the motion.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is my pleasure to second the opposition motion in support of the new direction being proposed by the Friends of Macphail.

Many Islanders are aware of the acute crisis facing agriculture in our province, a crisis which only seems to get worse and worse under this administration.

Our present agricultural model just doesn't seem to be working and every day more and more farmers are going out of business. We keep hearing talk about finding new agricultural models, but where are such models to be found? What is this government doing to develop and promote new farming models and concepts?

In the past, government played a central role

in agricultural research, demonstration and extension. The federal government carried out much valuable research on its local experimental farms, while the provincial government had strong agricultural extension programs, featuring on-site visits to Island farms.

During the government of Angus MacLean, as part of a rural renewal policy, a special new program was created in support of small and part-time farmers. Unfortunately, over the years all of these programs have been cut out and agricultural research is now left to the private sector, with firms like Cavendish Farms.

We should remember that government played a key role in the development and promotion of such important agricultural initiatives as the Island's seed potato and dairy industries, as well as the spread of cheese making factories throughout the Island in the 19th century. It's time for government to help promote a new model of agriculture for the Island, one which is labour intensive, innovation intensive, marketing intensive, and environmentally sustainable.

I believe the Macphail Homestead could play a key role in helping to show the way through intensive on-site research, demonstration, and outreach. In fact, such a vision for the Homestead was suggested 20 years ago by Dr. George McRobie, a world leader in the development of intermediate technology and president of the Soil Association, England's leading organization for the promotion of organic agriculture.

In 1990 George McRobie was on the Island's - one of the most several visits sponsored by the Institute of Island Studies at UPEI. This is a renowned gentleman that's been here. He's been sponsored by the Institute of Island Studies. They've seen the value of his great research ability and his

time that he spent working with them.

At that time he wrote a report entitled: Macphail Farm: Demonstrating Sustainable Agriculture. In his recommendation he suggested the farmland part of the property become the Macphail Farm, a resource centre of information and practical assistance to farmers wishing to convert to organic, sustainable systems and methods, including a major outreach component of on-farm experiments and adaptation. It would also have a public information and education.

This is a very good suggestion that was put forth in his recommendation. He has a vision, and a lot of what he was talking about a great number of years ago are things that we've been looking for in agriculture at the present time, trying to diversify from the commodity market of agriculture to new markets and to make sustainable agriculture. It's people like this - Dr. McRobie had a vision and could see where this was the way to be moving forward.

He also said that the woodlands in this property, and I quote: The forest part of the farmstead become a demonstration and experimental area for different forms of woodlot management and practice and the emphasis on sustainable and sound environmental practices.

They've been doing that. It just goes to show that when you have experts looking at areas and suggestions that can happen that we should probably paying more attention and putting more emphasis on moving forward.

On this farm we're talking about the agricultural component, we're talking about forestry component also. It's a great facility that we're only tapping the surface on the abilities of what could happen there.

Many Islanders are aware of the wonderful work which has been done for the past 19 years by Gary Schneider and his coworkers with the Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project, work so fine that the Macphail team has been entrusted with management of some 2,000 acres of public lands in the area.

The 2,000 acres weren't just turned over to Gary Schneider and his workers without reason. The reason being is that he showed great leadership in the forestry sector and how to properly manage woodlands, and he's done a fantastic job there.

In conclusion, I urge government to give a high priority to sustainable agricultural research and demonstration as it considers ways to assist the Friends of Macphail implement its new vision for this historic Island homestead.

Sir Andrew Macphail was perhaps one of the greatest spokesperson for a small, independent family farm of his day. It would be entirely fitting for his home property to become the primary testing and demonstration grounds for the dynamic, small-scale, sustainable agriculture of the future.

That's that part of it. But over the years schools and their social study programs have taken a large number of students to Macphail's for an outing. They get a tour of the facility. They get a demonstration. It was one of the events that kids look forward to going to and getting through and going through the woodlands and visiting the area and getting some hands-on research showed to them, how to manage the woodlands and the benefits and what should take place with woodlands.

But Macphail's also have had a number of other events over their years. I can remember as an MLA sitting here, attending

one of the parliamentary conferences that was hosted here a number of years ago. One of the outings and the social outings for the parliamentary conference was down to Macphail's.

People were amazed from all over Canada about the peaceful quiet atmosphere of the Macphail homestead. People walked through some of the trails and they were all in the facility. There was nothing really fancy about the place, but it was well appreciated by all the delegates that came and that were taking part in it.

I think the leader of the opposition at that time was the minister from transportation and public works. He was here from the opposite side at that particular time. He was the leader of the opposition. I know that he enjoyed his time down there immensely. I think they fed us pretty well that day. I think maybe we even had some lobster, if I remember correctly. It was a great day.

Also at Macphail's, there's been a great number of weddings that's been hosted at that facility over the years. That's because the grounds are so nice and the trees are beautiful. It's great for pictures. Wedding pictures have been taken there over the years. So it's turned into an events place, too, and that could be expanded.

I remember, at times, supplying EDA workers for their trials so that they could carry on some of these banquet and other things that went on at the Macphail Homestead.

It's great to see this motion come forward. I know that the members will likely speak to this because we talk about its forestry part of it and we talk about the tourism part of it. It's a real tourism part of the area. It's a place where tourists will go to visit and see. As the Leader of the Opposition (Indistinct), the report and the study that was done on

Macphail's and was given to the minister of tourism and culture because this is a cultural tourism area here in the province.

So it just goes to show that there's a lot of volunteers that have been working very hard to keep the Macphail Homestead going. They need support and they need help. I think that this is - as the Leader of the Opposition said earlier, we look at Anne of Green Gables. Well, Macphail's down there has a different history but one that could be every bit as important and I think it's something that we should be looking at. If we can do some assistance in this program and for this organization, they're in much need. It would be shameful if we didn't keep this centennial homestead continually going because it is part of our history here in the eastern part of the province and we'd like to see it continue.

So with that, Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to rise to speak to this motion this evening. I'd like to also recognize the members of the board and the volunteers from the Sir Andrew Macphail Homestead that are with us here this evening.

I think that all the members of this House can agree that the Macphail House and the property in Uigg is one of the real assets of this province. It was given to us by the family of Sir Andrew Macphail in hopes that it would be a memorial to the man himself, to the early Scottish settlers of the province and to the relationship that the Islanders have had with the land.

The property has been managed on behalf of the province for the last 19 years by Mr.

Andrew Macphail Foundation. This group has contributed an immense effort and personal commitment to the operation of the site. The provincial government has been called on many times during this period to support the group and over the years we've made significant investments in the property.

Although not required to under the present leasehold agreement, the province is undertaking capital repairs, has improved the road access to the site and has, through our employment development programs and Jobs for Youth, maintained staff levels which has allowed the site to stay open.

Knowing that the group has been faced with significant costs we have also eliminated property taxes on the premises. During the last few years the group has been faced with major problems: declining attendance, an aging volunteer base and increased costs.

Last year there were challenges to develop a new vision for the property, one which would continue to see a vibrancy for the site. The board faced this challenge squarely and in a series of public and group meetings they completely rethought the mission of their organization and developed an alternate future for the site. A future that went beyond the traditional museum approach and which embraced their natural history, environmental sustainability and rural development.

I would like to congratulate the group on their creative approach as they seek to build a coalition of support which would ensure that the Macphail site continues to serve and educate Islanders in the future.

This is a group that has risen to the challenge. They have recognized that the Macphail site is not just a heritage site, it is not simply a tourist attraction, it has a broader purpose and serves a wider

population. It is one of the few sites on PEI which effectively interprets our natural history and environment.

We've had a number of discussions with representatives of the board on the future of the property and assessing and engaging a number of government departments and other partners if the new vision is to go forward.

Inasmuch as this resolution has asked the government to consider increasing its support to ensure the continuation of Macphail Homestead, I can tell this House that we are giving consideration for the proposal that has been forward. We consider it a good approach, and I'm sure that every department that is potentially involved in it will be examining the request in the context of the fiscal resources at their disposal.

In their approach, the Friends of Sir Andrew Macphail have demonstrated the dedication, commitment and determination which characterized our earliest settlers. Their example is one which many groups should follow. I thank them for all their work. Groups such as this make our province a better place.

I would also like to mention that the MLA for Vernon River-Stratford has been lobbying very hard on their behalf, and he's done a great job, and he should be commended for that as well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I'm pleased to rise to speak on this

resolution. I want to welcome Harry Baglole and Mr. and Mrs. Patton and anyone else from the Macphail Homestead board or from the area down there. This is one beautiful area, that's for sure. It's right in the heart of my district and I love it dearly. We have been working strongly with the group down there to stay in business over the last couple of years.

I know when we first got elected in 2007 I spoke to the Premier about the possibility of having our first caucus meeting outside of Charlottetown to come out to Macphail Homestead, and we did that. The very first caucus meeting we had outside of Charlottetown, we went to Macphail Homestead. We had a meal there. We even got to meet with the great-granddaughter of Sir Andrew Macphail himself. She came in and she spoke to us, Jean Webber, and she spoke to us and gave us a history of the building, told us what about had happened in 1988, and how the group had got together and brought it back up like a phoenix from the ashes. It had all fallen in. The work the board was doing, and a good story on Sir Andrew Macphail himself.

Since that time, just a few little items that has happened in the last three years after our first caucus meeting there. I approached the minister of finance and went through Treasury Board and the payment for property taxes that they were paying over the last many years, was done away with, which we only thought was fair. That was very well received by the board of directors itself.

Over the last three years, through the Jobs for Youth and the EDA program, in helping them with their workforce out there with the restaurant and on the property, we put in over \$55,000 on those programs to help with salaries and stuff. Last year we paved the road that comes from the Trans-Canada Highway right up to the edge of the historic

property. No further than that because we didn't want to go any further than the property line, but that road was all busted up.

I know when we went out there as a caucus some of the people decided - and I've heard other people who went out to Macphail before as well - could it actually be down this road? It was in that bad need of repair. The signage is bad, we still need to do some work there.

But a real gem, some people say in the middle of nowhere, at the end of a road that people didn't even think you could traverse. Maybe if you had a horse and cart, maybe you could, go back that far. Maybe that's what we should have done was take it up and put a cobblestone road in there. But it is now paved right up to the property and easily accessible to anyone who may want to go there.

I think one of the biggest problems, most of the people in that area love Macphail's. Most of them have given their heart and soul to the property and want to keep it going. I think the numbers stand right now, the board of directors is supposedly supposed to have 12 members. They now have six, or at the organizational meetings, (Indistinct) hearing from Janice Whelan. There are now six on the board. One of those six lives out of province. For them to have a meeting they have to do a conference call with that person who's out of province because that's how few people they have on the board.

Not only that, Janice was saying, that not one of the six presently on the board was born in that area. The local area, a lot of them, took their turn and to some degree were burnt out. And of course, were frustrated by the fact that they had to pay taxes, they had to raise money continually to keep this thing going. Not only that, in the same area right next door is Orwell Corner.

A lot of these people have served on the Orwell Corner board. There was discussion: Why can't we bring these two groups together and have one entity? That's not happening, apparently. It has been looked at and it's not about to happen.

The Leader of the Opposition actually mentioned, too, *The Master's Wife*. I have a copy of that book and it is a fantastic book. A real good read. This year, too, the Leader of the Opposition also mentioned about the launch of the new book, *The Life and Legacy of a Canadian Man of Letters*. I was at the book launch for that. Actually, the man who wrote it is a neighbour of mine and a real good friend of mine ever since I was growing up, Dr. Ian Ross Robertson. He did a superior job of putting this together talking about Macphail and about the property itself and the history of the property and the situation it's in right now and the need for support of it.

It's interesting to listen to the Member from Montague-Kilmuir talk about going back. I know this is one of the things that the group is now looking at, going back and having the centre of excellence. In a lot of ways that makes a lot of sense. But unless I misunderstood him, to go back to the way agriculture was and to follow Macphail's thoughts fully, I'm not knocking that, but we as an Island and a province and agriculture community can't follow everything that he said to the letter of the law, because those definitely were different times.

When I read this book - and I said this when I spoke at the book launch, and this is not just to put a negative spin on it - but I just want to mention a couple of things that (Indistinct) here in the book. It talks about Macphail (Indistinct): These farmers produced primarily for use, not for exchange in the accumulation of treasure. The predominance of this mode of production was the essential characteristic of the social

ideal back then.

He talks about the western farmers had erred in their single crops and how they had gone from multi-cropping here, like we did, and mixed farming to a single crop. Macphail says: Such a way of life let little room for ones love of fields and animals as distinguished from their productivity. Which to me is kind of an insult because I was a dairy farmer and strictly a dairy farmer. I knew my animals, loved my animals, I knew my land, I loved my land, I loved working on it. It was quite possible to do that, to have a love of the earth and to have a love of the animals, even if you're not in a mixed farming situation.

The other comment that kind of disturbed me, it said - and quoting Macphail, according to Ian Ross Robertson: Hence, it is not surprising that Macphail, a self-declared spokesman for eastern Canadian brand of mixed farming, should choose to remain aloof from the farm organizations of the day, based as they were on business farming.

It's long been a thought and a belief of my own, and I think if you speak to any of the other members here who are from an agriculture background - agriculture is a business. Some people will tell you it's a lifestyle, farming's a lifestyle. Agriculture is a business, first and foremost. When I was farming, I was in love with my cattle and my land and everything, but it was my business. When I stopped milking cows I said: I sold my business. Just like a shoe repair shop or a plumber or whatever, they're in a business, and at the end of the day you can sell your business.

To go back and set up a centre of excellence and look at this for organic farming, there is a lot of good merit to that. For small farms, people wanting to start out and such like that, this new centre of excellence, there is a

lot of merit to that. To take that broad spectrum of what we should do on PEI, if that's what I took from them, the Member from Montague-Kilmuir, is going, from my opinion, way too far. But as a centre of excellence for those smaller areas back to nature, back to organic farming, things like that, lot of possibility and in some ways and in many ways, a real good idea.

I met with the board, took members of the board, Mr. Patton was with, I believe, when we went to see the former minister of community and culture affairs to discuss the situation with her at the time. Actually, some of these board members were carrying debt on their own personal credit card for fuel oil and things like that. That's the dedication they had to the Macphail Homestead to get it through. Even though we put as a government, cancelled the taxes, put money into the Jobs for Youth and the EDA, paved the road, that sort of thing, they were carrying debt that was not covered from the summer's employment and sales of the restaurant and things like that. They had to pick that up and carry it themselves.

The minister at the time actually wrote a cheque to get rid of some of that debt. The talk at that time was: Come back to government again, but come back with an idea and an agenda where we don't have to be like this every year. Come up with an idea what can we do with Macphail, or what can be done at Macphail that will pay its way. Because as you can see from the report of the minister of finance, we have a deficit here, a big deficit. Our priority is - this government is education and health and that's what's the people of the province want to hear.

We have problems in agriculture, in fisheries, in all the other commodities and all the other areas. When we have a caucus meeting, and from what I hear when they have a Cabinet meeting, almost constantly

there is an ask no matter what that group is. We cannot meet the asks of everybody just because they need money. But the minister at the time was very right in what she said. Come up with a plan, bring it back to us, sell the idea to us and let's see if we can go forward.

There was then a meeting at Vernon River School in which a large turnout came out to talk about where can we go forward. Let's develop this plan. There were people who had previously been on the board, who were on the board at the present time, and people from the neighbourhood really interested in Macphail. Actually was a really good turnout at the Vernon River School for that. Then the meeting was set up to meet at Beacons Field. Unfortunately, I was not at that one, I was out of province at the time. But they came forward with a plan from that, took it to the minister of tourism and culture, and in talking with the minister, he is really interested in this.

The whole ask, he can't handle the whole ask, but the idea is to meet with - just like many groups do - find every little nook and cranny where you think you can get a dollar, put a package together, and let's see if we can go forward with a long-term plan, something that makes sense, and we will be able to keep this little jewel - as some people say is in the middle of nowhere, it's in a beautiful spot in the heart of Vernon River-Stratford area.

I want to commend the group again for coming up with this plan, but we need to all work on it, we need to all support it and go forward, because we certainly do not want to lose the little gem that have right now.

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. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just would like to add a few comments to my colleague from Vernon River-Stratford. I know how passionate he is in regard to this particular project.

Myself, having been involved with the Bideford Parsonage Museum in my own community, it was a gem that we didn't want hauled away to Cavendish because of its connection to Lucy Maud Montgomery. I know our community rallied and, at the time, were outraged that it might be lost, but it does take dedication to regenerate a group and for them to move forward and to come up with some new ideas.

I mean, right now we have the West Country Historical Society with the parsonage museum, but it's the same people. I know the frustration and the tiredness, and the burnout that occurs from knowing in your heart that it is such an integral part of your community and its history, and yet, how can you keep the financial side of it going?

From a personal perspective, I have been to Macphail Homestead a number of times. I've read *The Master's Wife*. There is a family connection. Being a bit of a novice genealogy student I trace back my family history from the Smiths on the Smith side and Catherine Smith - a Macphail - was a sister to my great-great-grandfather Morris Smith, who went from Orwell up to Victoria West and settled the farm up there. It talks in the book about coming back down, and the burial. So it is a personal connection that I have and I find it very interesting and intriguing to see that history as part of my own roots as well.

I commend the community who has put their work into it, and the nature side of it is very important as well, with the flora and the fauna, which they have developed over the years, which lends much educational value as well.

So I think by working together and trying to move forward and regenerate some new ideas, perhaps it will also rejuvenate that site. I just want to support my colleague in his endeavours in trying to move the project forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to rise, and it's considered a privilege, for sure, to rise and express my opinions and feelings on the motion.

As a tiller of the land for 38 years, using land and agriculture has been very good to me. I've toiled over it and made a living. As I listened to the previous speakers, I almost think I could sit down and actually have a discussion with Sir Andrew Macphail even though it's a different time.

I'd like to give you just a little bit of back history. About 10, 12 years ago, I saw a real need for an educational site on PEI for agriculture. At that time agriculture tended not to be engaging with society and there was this mis-communication out there between urban folk and country folk. At that particular time we had one site when I was tilling the land, and it's called the Maple Plains Agro-environmental Demonstration Site. I'll just give you a little brief background. It's a 174-acre site. It's got wetland on it. It's got forest land. It's got open farmland.

I approached the Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association at that particular time and said: Are you folks interested in using this as a model? I see a real need out there to connect and communicate with all parts of society so it's not farmers over here and non-farmers over here. We need to come together. We can solve our problems that way. We did sign a 15-year agreement. They use the site. They do soft core - I'll call it soft core - research. They demonstrated what hedgerows do. They installed duck ponds. There are three duck ponds on the site. They count insects in the ponds and measure whether the numbers go up and down if there's a crop beside them.

What I wanted to do was demonstrate how you can carry out - I'll call it intensive agriculture, or normal agriculture today, along with maintaining and preserving the environment on the other side. That's the two key things that need to go together. So, even though Sir Andrew Macphail was born in a different time, we probably shared the same thoughts and the same view as he did in his lifetime many years ago.

Without question, sustainable agriculture is a high priority for our government today, and the department that I lead, and I want to make that point extremely clear out there so there's no misunderstanding. I also want to compliment the family, and the friends, if you like, for the noble effort that they've carried forward to try to tie profitability into this thing. Because every business has a bottom line and you have to be profitable somewhere down there or it just doesn't work. So the folks are around the community, and the supporters have made a noble effort, so I really want to compliment them for that.

There's certainly been lots and lots of suggestions on the floor, whether it be culinary tourism, whether it be agriculture,

whether it be forestry, whatever, and I will admit that I have not seen the plan yet, the new plan. It hasn't come across my desk yet, and I haven't been made aware of it, but I will get it tomorrow and I will have a look at it and see what I think, how we could attach this to what we do, and use it maybe as a model, maybe as a demonstration site, maybe as an educational site, a combination of them all. But it's important that we do see it. I do see a value in it.

I think that whole site's valuable. I've had the privilege of being there at least twice, and I've been down by the creek, or the brook, and I've toured the forest situation there. So I have a basic understanding of what they've been doing there and what they've been trying to do, and that is good.

I will make a commitment as a department lead to take a look at the project and see where that all fits and to see how it could be made sustainable on a go-forward basis.

As my hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford said, it's a jewel out in the country and it is an asset to Prince Edward Island. Just how can you use that asset? I believe it's been meant to be used, and developed, and the trees grow on their own, unattended, and they have value down the road. So, you know, it's a changing landscape on a daily, monthly, weekly basis and that's good, as well as much of PEI is. So let's see what we've got and let's assess opportunities, and maybe there is something positive that that site can be used for.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, would like to rise in support of this motion.

I think that, as was already mentioned, it was a very valuable piece of property that's been there for a long time. I think the volunteers have done a fantastic job over the last 25 years or more, and certainly it's sad to see some people get burnt out from volunteering. But they are dedicated, they are passionate about what they believe in, and it's a site that you can step back in time when you walk in there.

I think it's part of our tourism package that - you know, we can't all have the books at the end of the year show that we broke even or we made \$1,700, but when you look at the big picture of what we do in tourism in this province, Sir Andrew Macphail Homestead is part of our tourism package, and it deserves to be part and to be funded by the province, I think.

I've been down there a number of times, and I have to give a lot of credit to Gary Schneider for the work he does with our forestry. It's an open classroom that he works with. He is very knowledgeable, and he does a fantastic job in educating not only Islanders but classrooms, tourists, on what is taking place in our native species that grow on the facility. He has spent, I guess probably two decades now looking out for, caring for and maintaining that property. Not only that, has even expanded his work now in looking after other acres that the province has just because of the work that he does.

I think it's important that we support this motion. I think we also should support a new study, but I don't think it should be right down to black and white: if it doesn't make money, it's not going to get funded, and the facility will be left to go by the wayside. I don't think that's on the cards at all. I think it is a jewel. I think it is a step

back in time, and I think it's a very important part of the tourism product in this province. It should be maintained and properly funded, and I hope that the government does see what the people see in it, not only from the area but people like Gary Schneider and them that do put their heart and soul into what this facility is all about.

I just hope that the government does support the motion and supports the group with proper funding to maintain and keep this as part of our tourism product for many years to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'll be supporting the resolution. I, too, will commend Gary Schneider and his work down there. I know the province, a number of years ago, gave him the management rights of a number of acres down there for the forest, 2,000 acres, and it's been a tremendous asset to Prince Edward Island. A tremendous amount of research has come out of his research and that research can be used by the department of forestry in terms of applying what best practices that have been applied down there to the forest across Prince Edward Island.

The Province of Prince Edward Island is looking to getting all of our forests lands in Prince Edward Island, especially our provincially owned ones, certified, and I guess Gary Schneider's a long way down

that road in order to get some of his property certified and talking to some of the people that have been in this certification stuff.

It is a tremendously managed forest down there and a tremendous amount of work has gone on down there so we can apply the research and the things that are found down there into the forest across Prince Edward Island.

I also want to take the time here, Madam Speaker, to thank the various groups that have been involved. I've been down for meetings at Macphail's. It's a beautiful location, beautiful site. If all the departments can work together and see what we can do in that particular area, especially with the plan they have put forward, something can happen down there, so I'll be supporting it.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Ms. Dunsford: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In order to get to Macphail's you do have to go through Stratford from there. I've been in Stratford for many years and my first memory of MacPhail's was when my children were very young. They were very interested in trees, in birds and nature in general.

I think it was sometime in the mid-1980s when some programming started there with organized walks, and Gary was the guy doing it back then. He's still going strong. He reminds me of an animation that was produced back, I believe, in the late 1970s by the National Film Board. It was called *The Man Who Planted Trees*, if anybody's familiar with that.

Gary just quietly goes about his business. He also is very open to sharing his information and knowledge about how to not only rebuild the once vibrant Acadian Forest of Prince Edward Island, but how we can all take part in that.

It's great that we have a leader like Gary who does that work physically and who helps governments, organizations like Macphail organization. Just generally, he's somebody who works for the Island.

He's helping in a way that most of us might not really notice because we usually just kind of drive by too fast in our cars. But if you ever have an opportunity to get out on your way to another area or that is your destination, which is preferable, it's really worth getting a chance to go see just how that forest has changed.

The interpretation that Gary gives is invaluable, very knowledgeable. What we thought we knew about the coniferous and deciduous trees of Prince Edward Island that make up the Acadian Forest, and then learning that, in fact, we have so many more species that most of us didn't know existed. That goes with the wildlife in that area, too. Because of the richness of the forest, how the wildlife has been influenced by that and how, in fact, not only has an organization and a group of people been responsible for enhancing and protecting that, but it's actually helped the real true physical environment on Prince Edward Island in a very important way.

The area is a true model for a way that we could be doing all kinds of things, not just as far as taking care of our forest, but as mentioned before, with agriculture. Lots of great examples there too. Preserving our heritage, recognizing where we come from and where we are today and how we got there.

I commend those who have been working on this over the many years and those who have put in the time to do the research, and I will fully be supporting this motion 100%.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Looks like I'll be going to the hon. Leader of the Opposition to close debate on the motion.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm really pleased that everybody spoke so passionately about the motion. Thank you to the minister of agriculture that's going to take a look at this proposal. I also encourage the minister of education - I could tell you several ways and different parts of your department that could help with a contribution to this project as well. The Minister of Tourism and Culture, it's great that he's taking another look.

There's quite a bit of money that's in the Budget that this proposal actually meets in different government departments. It also highlights from the Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry, sections that could be covered for contribution, especially the department of rural development, and of course the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

As I close off debate, I think it's also important that the government work with the federal government. Because there is dollars there, and I'm sure that Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, natural resources, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada as well as ACOA should be participating in this as well. I really encourage the minister of tourism to champion this proposal. I think the time has

come for a person that really believes in rural PEI and especially in agriculture. An investment here can actually help us all be a lot healthier in the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, you've heard the debate on the motion.

Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those voting in favour of the motion, signify by saying 'yea.'

Some Hon. Members: Yea!

Speaker: Contrary minded?

Motion's carried and it is unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

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 Alberton-Roseville, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a great evening.

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