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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. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone in the public gallery today. I see lots of familiar faces, actually. I recognize a couple today. Great to see Allan Johnston here from the eastern end of the province and also a former - still a friend, but someone that I knew when I was growing up at Brudenell golf course, Bobby Rowell. Great to see Bobby here in the gallery today. I know he played a lot of golf and hopefully he still gets the chance to get out a little bit. I also see Allan Malone, who was a friend of my father's and now a friend of mine. Great to see him here in the gallery as well.

I'd like to welcome everyone else to the proceedings today and all those watching on EastLink channel 10. Hope they're having a very happy and healthy 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 too and welcome people today, especially the people in the gallery. Many of the regulars, Kenneth Murnaghan and of course Bobby Rowell is actually from my district, so it's great to have him here today.

I'd also like to say hello to all of the people

watching on EastLink. Finally, I think it would be nice to wish all the people that work in senior care facilities to have a really good day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise to welcome all guests to the gallery, and I certainly welcome Kenny Murnaghan from my district and Mr. Gallant in the gallery, who raised his family in Parkdale during the years when I was growing up.

Certainly would like to acknowledge all the people who are watching today from home, but most importantly to remind folks who are at home, if they're not doing anything this evening, the annual spring concert is being held at Parkdale Elementary School tonight, the Breakfast Club. Doors open at 6:30. They're expecting a capacity crowd so if you want a great evening of entertainment, swing by Parkdale Elementary School tonight.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, would like to welcome everybody in the House here today. I see Eddie Lund and Al Malone and Wes and Kenny. It's great to see you all here. I'd also like to send my

congratulations to Maria MacDonald on her appointment as Information and Privacy Commissioner.

I'd also like to extend my condolences to Blair Weeks, the general editor of *Minding the House*, on the death of his grandmother, Marion MacDonald.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Statements by Members

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

Recognition of Randy Robar

Ms. Docherty: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It was such a pleasure to recently see the front page of the local newspaper and read a good news story on an Island resident, particularly one who resides in the District of Kellys Cross-Cumberland.

Randy Robar recently retired from the position of Chief Superintendent for Prince Edward Island after a stellar 39 years with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Mr. Robar began his career at the young age of 21 at a time when only single men were accepted into the force.

Over the 39 years he has seen considerable changes that have positively impacted his role. Whether it was the inclusion of women, changes to the judicial system, or the advances of technology, all had a major influence on policing. Regardless, Mr. Robar has had a very interesting and challenging career.

He has worked in the provinces of Prince Edward Island - sorry, Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, holding various positions throughout his career. To highlight a few, he was part of the

first bilingual troop, he worked as an intelligence analyst on organized crime, worked for the Solicitor General in Ottawa, and, of course, his most recent position as Chief Superintendent.

One might think that after 39 years in one profession Mr. Robar would be looking forward to retiring and enjoying some down time with his wife Paulette, his family and friends. However, that is not the case. Mr. Robar has taken on the role of Corporate Management Officer for the RCMP in the Atlantic region, a role he previously did. Mr. Robar states that he is only going to do this position for a year or so, but knowing his work ethic we will wait to see when he truly retires.

Mr. Robar's work ethic is one of the reasons he was invested into the Order of Merit of the Police Forces in 2007. The primary focus of this award is exceptional merit, contributions to policing and community development. It is based on one's full career, not just a single incident or contribution.

What more can one say about who Mr. Robar is? Based on everything that I have learned about Mr. Robar and his career, I am not at all surprised that his two children, Adam and Robyn, have also decided to dedicate their professional lives to the RCMP. Adam is stationed in Liverpool, Nova Scotia and Robyn is a crime analyst in Ottawa, Ontario. Obviously, the apple hasn't fallen too far from the tree, and I have no doubt Mr. and Mrs. Robar are extremely proud of their children.

It has been a privilege to speak about Mr. Robar today, as I am sure he is quite modest about his achievements. I wish Randy Robar all the best, and I actually look forward to hearing how he plans to spend his next 39 years.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Stacy MacWilliam-CIBC Run for the Cure

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased today to rise to speak of the many volunteers assisting those who have been diagnosed with the dreaded disease of breast cancer. One such volunteer that I, as MLA for O'Leary-Inverness, would like to recognize is Stacy MacWilliam of Springfield West.

Stacy organized a team of 42 dedicated volunteers as part of her Stacy's Arsenal team which participated in the CIBC Run for the Cure event on October 4th, 2009. This event raises money for breast cancer research. Stacy's team was the top fundraising team for PEI, raising over \$9,400 for this worthy research. One particular event was a pub night, held at the O'Leary legion, which raised over \$4,500 alone. Stacy herself was commended as the top individual fundraiser.

During the Run for the Cure, when she crossed the finish line, she was met with resounding cheers from her family and friends. Finishing the crossing line was an amazing feat, considering she herself was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2009 and had just completed her final three chemotherapy treatments just before the run.

Just a few days before Mother's Day, I, as the son of a mother who was diagnosed with this dreaded disease, and has defeated it, thankfully, am personally grateful to those like Stacy who raised the funds to provide for new research for one day to defeat this dreaded disease. We in the Legislature

congratulate Stacy and her team for their efforts in raising money for this worthy cause, and to Stacy for finding that determination is stronger than any disease.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. member, I appreciate the 93 seconds that it took you to read your 90 second statement.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Dundas Plowing Match

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

I, too, am also very pleased today to rise to recognize the hard work and dedication of the organizers and the many volunteers of the Dundas Plowing Match. These volunteers work year round and spend countless hours working for the betterment of the agricultural community in this province.

The beautiful facility make it easy to showcase the tremendous talents of rural Prince Edward Island.

I'd like to make special mention of our president, Sandra Acorn, and the executive members Bruce MacLennan, Gordon Jackson, Dean MacKinnon, Shelley Ployer and Paul Jackson, along with the many more volunteers that work extremely hard year round to put on the best agricultural show in Prince Edward Island.

I'm looking forward to another successful event this year. I would also at this time like to thank the provincial government and the federal government for supporting and funding a new facility this year. I wish to

invite all Islanders and tourists to visit the beautiful Dundas Plowing Match grounds this August.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Just for your information, that was 90 seconds. Bang on.

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

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

Lottery system for kindergarten teachers (further)

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I ask for your indulgence in answering this question as I feel it is important to correct the misinformation that the hon. Leader of the Opposition brought to members and the public yesterday afternoon.

I would like to emphasize that, as minister, as I've indicated, I've not been involved in the hiring process for kindergarten teachers and that I have, and always will have, full confidence in the staff in the department, as well as the three school boards, that the process conducted was a fair and open one.

The goal of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and all three school boards across the province, is to build the best and most balanced teaching teams in all schools across our One Island community. The department and the school boards made every effort to consider preferences of teachers, but the needs and the best interests of the students, in some cases, outweighed the geographical preferences of the teachers.

Each interview was conducted by

government and had professionals that were engaged in that to ensure fairness during the interview process. All principals agreed to consider student needs first, then to consider other factors such as the family of school needs, district needs and teacher location preference. All principals agreed the schools with more than one class should consider a balanced mix of more or less experienced teachers, experience with special needs children, matching the skills of the teachers with the needs of the students.

Through this process the principals looked at a number of different factors that determined which schools have the highest needs. The schools with the greatest need were given first opportunities to (Indistinct) teachers. Schools were identified as having the greatest need through literary assessment data that was reconfirmed by the superintendent in the media recently.

So I just would like to remind, and also share, with the Leader of the Opposition and all members of the House that we're extremely excited by the five-year-olds coming to the public school system, and that all kindergarten teachers were treated with the utmost respect and fairness through the entire process.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Corrections to newspaper article

Mr. MacKinley: Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, I just want to correct an article in the *Guardian*.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: Is that okay?

Speaker: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: In the paper today, Wayne Thibodeau wrote: MacKinley said the province should save about 400 annually. Basically what we're saving on the contract is 400 to 500,000 over a six-year term.

Another one here, another question Mr. Thibodeau wrote: No open tender was called for the work, quoted by the gentleman over there, too, I guess he told him.

Anyway, there was a RFP called. Transportation and public works did not call a tender because we can't call a tender. It falls under Island Waste Management Corporation. They are the ones that called for RFP in removing the Tory tires and flushed the new tires that were coming in under the Liberals. Out of that, the Dawson company was a low bid but they couldn't get going quick enough for us to get rid of these tires.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) .

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, there was. Well, RFP, we'll explain it to you sometime.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: It's a process. It's almost the same - it's the same (Indistinct).
Anyway -

Speaker: Minister, minister, it's not - minister, just offer clarification.

Mr. MacKinley: - with that I'm going to table the contract agreement.

Thank you very much.

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Estimates on tourism season

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Mister Minister, it's fast approaching tourism season. Last summer the tourists arriving by air to Prince Edward Island were down. I wonder, has your department seen any encouragements, or estimates on traffic for this year for the upcoming season?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, my department has been working very hard with the airlines and the major players to offer more flights into the province, and things look well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Discussions with airlines

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Air traffic was down 10.2% in June. It was down 8.2% in July. It was down 7.9% in September and 9% in October. Although August we did have an increase of 4.5%.

Minister, what discussion have you had with airlines to bring up the air flights coming into the province?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, airline flights into the province have increased. Air Canada has increased flights from Montreal, from Toronto and from Halifax.

An Hon. Member: Ottawa.

Mr. Vessey: And Ottawa.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Has there been any airline services that have been cut for PEI this year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, Delta Airlines has changed a couple of flights that were on last year.

Boston, I believe, and Detroit have changed, but we've added a flight from New York.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you. Minister, should you be very concerned about this? Because Boston and Prince Edward Island has had a cultural and a family history for the last decades. Summer traffic from Boston to PEI has always been a good market and we're losing that. Do you expect that the New York traffic is going to hit the same results as the Boston?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, we're hoping that New York, as the hub of the east coast, is a good connector in. The numbers aren't in on that yet but it is a great flight, and I'm very happy to say that Delta has added it to their schedule.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, it's the same

minister.

Overnight stay from New England, we're down by over double digits last year in percentages. Minister, shouldn't you be trying to reverse that trend rather than move away from the New England states? What are you doing to bring back this traffic with Delta for bringing a flight in out of Boston?

I know the minister there, ex-minister, is trying to help you with the question, but if you could get (Indistinct), it'd be nice.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, it's unfortunate that the hon. member there is negative on the tourism flights.

This is a primary industry that's got the most potential in our province for growth and we've got great people doing great things in tourism. I'm very proud of my department.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mister Minister, I know the previous minister saw fit to spend a couple hundred thousand to go to Ottawa and have a wine and cheese party. That was her promotion to get the flights in from Ottawa. Minister, what are you doing? I mean, other governments have met with the companies and actually put some money on the table for them to come into the province. If we had to use it, it was there. But usually the air traffic picked up enough that we never had to use it.

So what are you doing? Have you met with these companies? Have you put a deal on the table to bring the flights in from Boston?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Yes, Madam Speaker, we've met with the airlines and we've put a package on the table.

They didn't accept it. We've got to be very focused on the flight that we did get out of New York. It's a major hub on the east coast and it's a great connector flight. That's what we have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: So, minister, you put a promotion on the table. Would you mind tabling that promotion, or agreement, that you put in with them?

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) that's a good idea.

Mr. Bagnall: Because, minister, it didn't work. So it can't be a great one.

So I'll go to the minister again. Madam Speaker, it's the same minister.

We have seen that the finance minister tabled massive deficit after deficit and, I tell you, there has been no financial restraint under this government at all.

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

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, I'm getting to it. It's in here.

Liquor commission

Madam Speaker, I understand that the

minister of innovation was moved from this file, from the liquor store.

I'm wondering, are we going to see any results now for the liquor commission? What are your plans for it now?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, I'd like the hon. member maybe to - results of what? I'm not clear on the question.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: That's all right, Madam Speaker.

I didn't think he would pick up on the - what his plans for the liquor commission were to move forward. But that's okay. The minister is responsible for the liquor commission. As a new minister, we are hopeful -

An Hon. Member: Here we go.

Mr. Bagnall: - that you will bring at least a sober thought to your department.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bagnall: Because obviously, there wasn't too many there in the past. So Mister Minister, what are you going to do about all of the renovations that are taking place in your department in times of restraint? Are you going to deal with that issue?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture .

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, as I said in the House before, it takes investment sometimes to make money.

I'm just not sure where the hon. member is

going with the question.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: That's fine. Madam Speaker, the minister knows that they've been spending and wasting money on breaking leases, renovations, and remodelling of Brooke MacMillan's office.

Can you tell us: Are you going to be dealing with some actual issues rather than making Brooke's office look good?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, Brooke's office, as the hon. member refers to, was, I believe, built in August of 1973.

We have people over there working in basements. There's no air conditioning. There's no ventilation. Four or five people sharing an office. We've increased our business, our profits are up. You have to invest money to make money, and to give people a place to work with quality of air and quality of ventilation. If he has a problem with that, so be it.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Minister, it's taxpayers' money that you're spending now. It's a time of restraint. It's a time when we're having massive deficits in government, and you're spending your money on remodelling offices.

I could understand if there were leaks in the roof or it was unsafe for the staff to work in. But to remodel the offices for the sake of giving a plush office to Brooke MacMillan is a waste of taxpayers' dollars. When are

you going to reel Brooke MacMillan in so that he gets his department under wraps?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, the CEO of the liquor commission has been doing a great job.

He's running it like a business, as it should have been. It's been a lot of years around there with not like a business. Profits have been up. I commend the CEO of the liquor commission for the job he has done in the sales in his commission.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes. We say how well he did with the last job he was in.

So, with that, will you table the exorbitant costs of the furniture - the nice plush furniture - you're putting in his office, and the department? Will you table the furniture costs for us?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, just so this House knows, the liquor commission last year returned \$37,000,800 to the province.

That's up 2.3 million from the previous year. Again, I commend the CEO of the liquor commission for a job well done.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I can understand that. If the provincial treasurer keeps raising the price of alcohol, of course the profits are going to go up.

With that, minister, will you make a commitment today to bring this CEO of the liquor commission - his spending in line? Will you make it - to bring it back under control? Will you make that commitment to the House today?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, the hon. member quotes (Indistinct) increases in liquor.

I'd just like the House to know that our prices in our province are low or lower than all Maritime provinces.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, we talk about the liquor commission and all the great spending and what they're doing.

The last thing they did last year was went out and hired wine and beer experts. I mean, that's over a hundred thousand dollars, plus the travel for all of these beer and wine experts to travel all over the world tasting wine. Minister, when are you going to bring these things in line? Are you going to continue to keep these positions?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, with the assistance of the positions that the hon. member has just mentioned, they were part of increasing the sales of the liquor commission to over \$37 million.

Consumer demand is driven, and we need managers to look after the products and ordering of the products. Again, the liquor commission sales are up 2.3 million over last year. I don't see a problem with that.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I understand that liquor sales are going to go up.

No problem. I understand that in order to do that he has to - in the real world, he would have to remodel to keep in line with other people. But he's got a monopoly. I mean, there's nobody else selling alcohol, there's nobody else promoting it.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: So how are you going to improve your profits when there's nobody else selling the product? You're not opening new stores. You're not opening it up to the public so they can sell the product. You have a monopoly. You set your own prices. You have a monopoly.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Bagnall: Why are you hedging on your operating costs? Because that's what's happening.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: I don't know if the hon. member wants us to privatize the liquor stores or not, but -

An Hon. Member: I think that's what he wants.

Mr. Vessey: Again, the liquor commission has an increase in sales, up \$2.3 million over last year. I commend the CEO of the liquor commission for that.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm wondering, minister, now that you're the minister, I know when you were in government member's office over there, your secretary worked for you there. Then you gave her the job as a wine tester, or a beer tester, and now you've changed around and you've taken her out of there again and you've put her back into your own office again. I'm wondering: What Liberal did you appoint into that position to fill her spot?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: I guess, again, a personal attack from the opposition. I believe the person he is noting was in the civil service for 12 years and applied to an internal competition by the Public Service Commission -

Premier Ghiz: You hired her.

Mr. Vessey: - and if the hon. member has a problem with that, then maybe he should bring it up with the Public Service Commission.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Now that you're in charge of this department, are you prepared to cut out this foolish spending on remodelling? The extra million dollars you're spending moving a liquor store from across the street in Stratford. Minister, we're in a time of restraint here. Will you cut out this foolish spending?

Mr. Sheridan: Return on investment.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, the liquor store in question, I believe, is in Stratford.

Since that store opened, it's increased 143% increase in sales. It's outgrown its purpose and we needed a larger location. We're treating it like a business. As I said earlier, you have to invest money to make money.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I agree the Stratford liquor store was doing well. It would still continue to do well.

Premier Ghiz: You couldn't move in there. When was the last time you were in there?

Mr. Bagnall: If you had competition moving in, then I could understand where you may have to do a remodelling, break leases, and increase rent space to do business. But you have a monopoly on this business. Why are you spending a million dollars to renovate and open up another store across the street from the one that is doing well, is putting on good increases, as you said? Why would you waste the money and do that remodelling?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, again, we're treating the liquor commission as a business.

It's time to move on and to get more space and open up markets and increase even more revenue from the liquor commission.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: What's the cost of this

remodelling?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, there are always costs to renovations.

We're making a business decision to move forward on a new move to a new location with more floor space. We'll continue to do business decisions within the liquor commission, good, sound, solid business decisions.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I don't think he heard the question. What is the cost of the remodelling?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: I don't know if I have that at the tips of my fingers or not, Madam Speaker, but I'll gladly have a look and bring it back if I can.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: So there is a cost?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: I do believe so.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Because the previous minister stood up in this House and he told us that

there wouldn't be any cost for anything to government. He's saying there was going to be no cost, you're saying there is. How much will the cost be?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, renovations always cost money.

If the hon. member there, he may be in the wrong business if he can make renovations for free. There is a cost for renovations. I said I'll look into it, and if I can bring it back I will.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you. I agree to that, but the previous minister stood up in this House and he said that there would be no cost.

An Hon. Member: Show me where.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll get the Hansard and show you, because it is in the Hansard. There will be no cost to do this business. But I guess that was -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: That was fantasy number one, I think.

Minister, will you come clean on this file and table all the costs associated with moving this liquor store across the street?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: As I said earlier, I'll have a look at that when I go back to my department. I'll bring it forward if I can.

Speaker: The hon. Member from

Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, we see that minister of finance's scheme to get the deficit under control is to sell more alcohol and smoke more cigarettes.

Minister, is that your theme, that if you remodel you'll sell more alcohol to help the provincial treasurer get some money for his Budget? Is that why you're doing that? So you get more people to drink in this province?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, the liquor commission's being run like a business, and if the hon. member has an issue with that then maybe he wants us to privatize it.

I'm not sure where he's coming from.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Will you stand up now today for the taxpayers and tell us that you will cut out these renovations, cut out this million dollar expenditure that you're going to be doing, and stay where you are and not waste the money this year in a time of restraint?

I know that we've had a habit of wasting money over there, but will you, as the new minister, stand up here and take some leadership on this file?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, the liquor commission's mandate is to make money.

Last year they returned \$37.8 million, up \$2.3 million from the previous year, and I

think that speaks for itself.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

McCain production

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the minister of agriculture. Mr. Minister, we've been hearing that McCain's are planning on cutting production this fall. Would you update the House on that?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, McCain's are downsizing on the volume of processing potatoes that they're going to require after October of this year.

Earlier this week, on Monday, we had a small delegation to Florenceville and talked to the vice-president and so on and discussed the issues around the future of the McCain's plant, encouraging them to increase production of specialty products, not decrease, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: To the minister of agriculture. Are there more potato contracts being cut because of this reduction in production?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, the cuts that will come into effect in October of this year, the producers have already been notified of those reductions between 30 and 45 days

ago.

They will be going from, I'm advised - five days, 24 hours a day is what they've been running and they're going back one day a week, which will be four days, 24 hours a day.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, to the agriculture minister: Will there be job losses at the facility?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we expect there to be temporary layoffs with regards to that downsizing.

McCain's alluded to the fact of the strong Canadian dollar at par with USA is one big issue that their whole fleet of processing plants is trying to endure.

The other issue is the recessionary economy that we're in at the moment. That has slowed the consumption of specialty potato products and that is a result of why they are cutting their volumes for an indeterminate period of time.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is disastrous news. Question to the finance minister. Will this cause you to change your projections on your revenue?

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

Mr. Sheridan: No.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the finance minister. The Canadian dollar affects lots of exports. We're talking about potatoes. It's going to have the same impact on blueberries, lobster, etc. Are you going to change your projections?

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

Mr. Sheridan: No, we will not be, Madam Speaker.

It does work for many different companies in the opposite direction. We're going to do everything, as we always have done on this side of the House, to encourage growth in business and I'm sure they'll make up for the difference.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you. Back to the agriculture minister, then. To the agriculture community, what are you going to be doing to help all these sectors and especially the potato sector that's already hurting?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we'll be continuing all our programs that we currently have to help growers through this

recessional or soft economy period of time.

Also, when we had our conversation with McCain's, we asked them if they would try to target a projection of a 35% increase over 24 months on their expansion. They replied back to us that certainly the quality of PEI potatoes are very good. The challenge around it is the high Canadian dollar and certainly the recessional economy.

If the economy starts to rebound in USA, that will make all the difference in the world. But they have a fleet of plants and they're all running at approximately 70% capacity at the moment, and there's some challenges around that. The way to make money is run it at a higher level than that. This is not a unique in PEI situation. It's pretty much all over North America, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We better take a broader look than that. If you look at Greece, the US, the whole international market is still quite volatile.

Financial support to McCain's

But my question to the innovation minister is: Last year you provided direct financial support to people that were working in Cavendish plant when they had to go through a layoff. Are you going to be doing the same for McCain's?

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

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

With McCain's or Cavendish or any other

business in PEI, if we're contacted by the company to try and assist in any way, with any program, we'd certainly entertain that request and evaluate it, and if we can help I'm sure we will.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Co-pay for drugs

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question is going to go to the health minister. When the government came in, in 2007, they had made a series of promises, many in the area of drug coverage. So my first question is to the health minister, and I quote what was told in the last election: This government was going to reduce the drug cost assistance program co-pay amounts for seniors by 50% over three years.

We need to remind the government they received \$24 million in surplus that year. So my question to the minister - it's in your three - why are you only starting to cover this co-pay right now and reduce it further next year? Is it because there's an election coming next year? Are you going to politicize this one, too?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm so pleased to be able to respond to this question as Minister of Health and Wellness. I am so pleased that our government that our government has fulfilled, in essence, half of that promise to this date of reducing this year the announcement of 25% reduction in

seniors co-pay in this province, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: Which, Madam Speaker, that equates to about a half a million dollars spent in that program line and it equates to putting a million dollars back in the pockets of Island seniors, 65 years of age and older. That is very significant.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: We have announced many new drugs in the last few days. We have a \$34 million-plus budget for drug programs in this province.

Madam Speaker, we're going to work to realize that election promise that we made as a government.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Community application for takeover of school

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Mr. Minister, a few months ago, the community of Grand Tracadie made application to your department to take over the school in Grand Tracadie. I believe it was a fairly favourable application. So, Mr. Minister, could you tell me how far along in process your department is with this application?

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

Mr. MacKinley: The transfer is going to go ahead. The community out there is going to provide services like early learning program, after school program, fitness program, library, computer (Indistinct) program, and a lot more. This is very great for the area, and I'm glad that the community came to approach government to take over this school.

Also, it's just a matter of the lawyers to finish up the legal work in the transfer and that could take a little time. We expect that to be completed probably in early June, late June.

Secondly is we're going to give them \$36,800 to look after this school, to get them on their feet, over the next two years. One grant.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Alberton courthouse

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd appreciate your indulgence with my preamble here. It might be a little - but it requires an explanation.

The communities of Alberton, Tignish and O'Leary that currently buy police services from the RCMP, it costs about \$95,000 each for each community. For that they get the equivalent of one officer for 40 hours a week. So you can see the negative impact that the previous government put on policing in the western part of the province when they closed the courthouse in Alberton. Out of that 40 hours, the officer's time that he has to travel to Summerside, court appearances in Summerside, come out of that 40 hours of protection that they should be patrolling the community.

So my question to the Attorney General is:

Will he consider reversing this decision?

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

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

We do know that the Alberton courthouse was closed in 2004, and since the closure all services have been provided through the Summerside courthouse. Recently we've been focusing on the Summerside courthouse, and we made investments in the new CourtSmart digital recording system. We've improved security measures. We're in the process of introducing closed-circuit television system that will facilitate testimony for vulnerable children.

Our immediate priority right now is to open the 48-bed unit at Sleepy Hollow, which is the provincial facility, and that facility is experiencing some fairly intense issues around overcrowding, and contraband getting into the facility. So that is our immediate priority.

The second part of the provincial modernization of the system will be the Summerside facility, but we are in discussions right now, the capital project team is in place and will continue to look at options and possibilities as we move forward, and certainly be willing to have more discussions as we move forward.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Co-pay for drugs (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In regards to the seniors co-pay, they currently actually pay \$11 drug cost for the first \$11, which is the part that government's actually reducing by 25%. The pharmacy fee ranges from s\$6 to \$9 which is the prescription fee. So, seniors are really paying between 17 and \$20 per prescription, with the proposed reduction would mean seniors are going to pay \$14 to 17, which is really only 14 to 16%. But that's okay. The government is trying.

My question is: Why are you manipulating the words and saying you're doing the start of this in year three? You had \$24 million when you first came in, and now you're going to do the rest next year, election year. Why are you manipulating people and trying to show that you're still following through to complete an election promise that should have been delivered in 2007?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm proud of the successes and the announcement that this government has made in regards to whether it be health, whether it be education, any other departments that this government has supported and fulfilled within our platform during the 2007 election under our Premier.

We are supporting our seniors in this province. Yes, we are working to realize that 50% as a promise to Island seniors. Yes, we have reduced their co-pay by two - \$8.25 versus \$11.

We are going through negotiations - we haven't started yet - with the pharmacy association and we will be working on that other extra amount during that negotiation process. So we are working to help Island seniors.

But I also have to just reiterate that the Leader of the Opposition, during those years when we were in opposition, in 2003, 2004, 2005, there were approximately 12 drugs added to the provincial formulary. They left the provincial formulary in disarray. We have added 45% to that budget line, this government, and we are investing in Islanders' health, Islanders' drug needs, and I'm very pleased of the accomplishments to date.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is another election promise that this government made in 2007. But it's great that we're making progress. I guess my question then, for all the seniors of the province, is: Are you telling the House today and the public that next year the 50% reduction will be on both aspects, both the pharmacy fee and the co-pay? Is that what you're telling us?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, I am standing here today, as I did two weeks ago, when we announced that the seniors' co-pay was reduced and the hon. treasurer said in his speech that the seniors' co-pay was being reduced by 25%, that we are working towards our election platform, and the election is still a year and a half away, so we still have time to work on all that.

May I also remind the Leader of the Opposition, we have realized drugs on our provincial formulary. We just added 10 new

drugs. There were 18 drugs added last year. Another election promise that was very critical to insulin dependent Islanders was the blood glucose test strips. This government has invested \$1.5 million into that program, and it is very valuable to Islanders, and another election platform promise that we have realized.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

No problem, we're going to get to that half-filled promise, too. My question to the minister is this, on this promise from the election: provide Islanders with the same access to publicly funded drugs as other Canadians by increasing the provincial government share of total drug spending to the national average. Right now that national average is \$292 a person. PEI is spending 236. I remind this minister, she inherited a \$24 million surplus. Why didn't you use some of that money to do what you said you were going to do during the 2007 election? Why not?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, this Leader of the Opposition has a short memory.

Because we inherited a drug program that was underfunded back in 2007. So let's bring everyone to reality. This government has increased a drug expenditure by 45%. We are spending in excess of \$34 million this year in drug programs, which is very valuable. Like I said before, do we have work to do? Yes. Am I pleased with the accomplishments we've made to date? Yes, I am. We will continue to work hard to

realize the drug needs of Islanders in this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

That's another broken promise from the election, but let's not help remind this minister, \$24 million in audited surplus, but also, the famous \$175 million that the federal government gave, the Building Canada Fund, broken down into \$25 million per year.

My question to the minister is: Why didn't you live up to your election promise? PEI is about 20% behind the Canadian average. Why didn't you use any of that money to fulfill your promise in 2007? Why?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker, Leader of the Opposition, I can respond to these of knowledge because of my old portfolio.

Infrastructure dollars, hon. Leader of the Opposition, if you weren't aware, were dedicated to specific infrastructure projects in this project. The federal government worked with that. It wasn't dedicated to drug programs in the province.

But are we working with the federal government and trying to ask the federal government to have a catastrophic drug program, a national pharmaceutical strategy for the country, Madam Speaker?

We are, and we want the federal government to come on board, to support this as national ministers of health and wellness in this

country. So I implore the Leader of the Opposition to get her facts straight.

I am so pleased that we were able to allocate the dollars we were this year in this budget. I thank the Premier, and I thank the treasurer, for helping us do that this year, and our whole government, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, these lovely Islander first for health care Liberal promises, number one, two, three, four, five, six, seven.

Drug coverage for the working poor

But my question to the same health minister is: Pat Binns actually negotiated 25 million per year for 175 million that was available. But one group in the province that is still struggling every day for drug coverage is adults who have no dependents and low incomes, the working poor. My question to the health minister: What are you doing to help with drug coverage for this group?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We have many different drug programs in the province. We are responding to the needs of Islanders, whether it be their income. I am not saying today that we have worked - again, I say, we have work to do. I've already committed on this floor to a modernization of our drug program here in the province.

But we have a host of different programs in this province that we do support Islanders that have economic needs in the province and maybe don't have access to those drugs. But, Leader of the Opposition, I would ask you to get your facts straight in terms of our drug programs, because we are investing in Islanders, we are investing in drugs, Madam Speaker, and I am pleased with our accomplishments to date.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, to the health minister, I was talking as recently as yesterday to a pharmacist who tells me what it's like to work in a pharmacy on a daily basis.

When people aged 55 to 64 come in, they have to order prescriptions and pay for them on a one week or a two week basis. They can't follow through with the prescriptions, taking them the way they should be, because they do not have the money. Right now there's no coverage for this group.

To the health minister: What are you doing for this group?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We accept a lot of phone calls through the department, through our drug program, our director Faye Martin and other staff members. But also the Leader of the Opposition must be cognizant, if she's talking to pharmacists as well, the Government of Ontario just instituted legislation with pharmacies, too. So there's another side of the story that we must be (Indistinct), but we're trying to work together here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

The Leader of the Opposition, I would ask her, she obviously takes one-off cases to this Legislature a lot, but I have to say that we are investing \$34 million this year in drug programs in the province. Very pleased last week that we were able to announce 10 new medications to the provincial drug formulary. Yesterday members of this Legislature were at a luncheon for the CNIB and their new Vision Health Month that they're announcing this month. They were so pleased that we were able to put Lucentis, a high cost drug medication, on our provincial drug formulary, and what quality of life that will bring to so many Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Presently on PEI 25% of people have no drug coverage. We're talking about approximately 35,000 people. This group of people, aged 55 to 64, they can't afford their medicine. When they are paying only on a week to week basis for chronic medicine they get sicker. It doesn't work. To the health minister: What are you doing for this group? And please don't avoid the question. Please answer this question, Madam Minister.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to list that the programs that we have in our department, because, you know what? We defended our budget yesterday and there were no questions in regards to the drug program when we defended our budget yesterday.

I would like to table, with your indulgence, some of the programs that we offer at no means testing to Islanders. We have the AIDS program, which is \$407,000-plus; transplant drug program in this province of almost half a million dollars; cystic fibrosis program, \$83,000-plus; growth hormone program at 66,000; PKU program for individuals needing formula free of charge, at 43,000. We have rheumatic fever program, we have STD drug program, we have a TB program, we have interferon program, hepatitis, immunization programs, at no means testing. We have a community mental health program. Nutrition service program.

All of these at no means testing to any Islanders. We are responding to Islanders in need through the high cost drug program, and we continue to work hard to even realize further supports to Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Update on *French Language Services Act*—*Mise à jour de la Loi sur les services en français*

Premier Ghiz: *Merci, Madame la présidente.*

Il me fait plaisir de mettre à jour les membres de l'Assemblée au sujet de la Loi, sur les services en français. Comme vous le savez, cette loi est entrée partiellement en vigueur il y a 10 ans. Depuis ce temps, le gouvernement a progressé dans son offre de service en français même si la loi, elle, est demeurée la même.

Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to provide

members an update on the *French Language Services Act*. As you know, certain parts of the act came into effect 10 years ago. Since then, government has progressed in its offer of services in French, even though there were no further enactments.

Madame la présidente, pour nous conseiller sur la mise à jour de la loi, nous avons fait appelle à l'ancien juge de la Cour suprême du Canada, l'honorable Michel Bastarache. Il s'agit d'une initiative conjointe entre la province et le gouvernement fédéral. Le juge Bastarache est la ressource la plus compétente en matière de législation linguistique. Il s'agit d'un partenariat d'importance, autant pour le gouvernement que pour la communauté Acadienne et Francophone.

Madam Speaker, to advise us in updating the act, we have called up former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, the hon. Michel Bastarache. This is a joint initiative between the province and the federal government. Justice Bastarache is the most competent resource when it comes to linguistic legislation. This initiative is an important partnership for both government and Acadian and Francophone community.

Le travail du juge sera appuyé par un comité directeur formé de hauts fonctionnaires d'expérience. Il sera également appuyé par le travail de consultation qui sera fait pour identifier les besoins prioritaires de la communauté Acadienne et Francophone en matière de service en français.

The justice's work will be supported by a steering committee that includes experienced members of senior management. He will also be supported by the consultations to be carried out to identify priority needs of the Acadian and Francophone community, when it comes to French services.

Madame la présidente, nous croyons que cette nouvelle approche permettra au gouvernement d'être plus proactive dans l'amélioration de son offre de services en français. Par le fait même, nous espérons pouvoir mieux desservir les besoins de notre communauté Acadienne et Francophone.

Madam Speaker, we believe this new approach will enable government to be more proactive in improving its offer of services in French. In doing so, we hope to better serve the needs of our Acadian and Francophone community.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

RCW training in Souris

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As minister responsible for post-secondary education, I am pleased to announce that government is partnering with Holland College to offer a new training program for resident care workers in Souris. This program will go a long way toward improving patient care across the province.

The resident care worker program in Souris will give training to 16 students this year who will be prepared for jobs in long-term care facilities in both the public and private sectors, in home care, and with community agencies.

My department is working to ensure that Prince Edward Island has an educated, well-trained work force. We are achieving this goal through our close partnerships with the

Island's post-secondary institutions. As the province is facing a skilled labour shortage, these partnerships are vital in order to make sure that the province's young people can get an education and build a career on PEI.

The new resident care worker program in Souris will give students access to job opportunities, and help ensure that we have trained professionals to provide quality care for the province's aging population, and the many other patients who require day to day care.

Through the Rural Action Plan, government is working to modernize education and support sustainable health services in rural areas. By bringing this new program to Souris, government is taking firm action on its commitment to look after the education and health care needs of Prince Edward Islanders.

I would like to thank our partners at Holland College, and look forward to continuing this partnership to offer programs that benefit the entire province.

I would like to welcome Rosemary White, who has joined us this afternoon, program manager for health and community studies at Holland College. As well, I just would like inform anyone who may have an interest in the RCW program in Souris that Holland College will be at the Souris Centre in the Main Street Mall on May 13th, from 6:00 till 7:30 p.m. To find out more about the resident care worker program at Holland College, people can visit the website www.hollandcollege.com, or call 1-800-446-5265, or email getready@hollandcollege.com.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and

Culture.

Increased library hours

Mr. Vessey: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The past year has been a very positive one for libraries across the province. At a time when there are so many ways for Islanders to obtain information, it is clear that our public libraries continue to play an essential role in our communities. Indeed, the support from communities is an essential contributor to this success because they are active partners in the delivery of library services.

Communities provide and maintain library facilities across the province. Our government builds on this network by providing staff and materials, and by managing the province-wide system. This is a partnership that works. In the last year, library circulation in rural branches grew by more than 10%. In a number of locations, including Montague, Morell, Souris and Stratford, growth in one year was more than 20%.

Last year this government was able to increase library hours in a number of these locations. I'm pleased to rise in the House today and tell members, in response to community needs and community support, we will be increasing the service hours in both Kensington and Souris, by six hours weekly, for a total of more than 600 hours of additional library services for rural Islanders.

This increase will bring the service levels in these locations to an equitable figure for similar communities across the province.

Our library services are built on a model of equitable services for all Islanders. Earlier in the session I told members how we were working with the CNIB to ensure that the Islanders with visual concerns had better

access to library resources. Today I confirm the commitment of this government to the principle that where every Islander lives they should have easy and appropriate access to many resources of our public library system.

I would like to close by acknowledging the importance of the branch library technicians, and the satisfaction that Islanders have with their services. I know that Stephanie Campbell in Kensington, and Kathy MacEwan in Souris, will be happy to celebrate these increased hours with their many clients and patrons.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

2010 property taxes

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

The 2010 property tax bills will be mailed tomorrow, May 7th. While it's hard to get excited about receiving a tax bill, there is some good news included in this year's document. First, there is no increase in assessments on owner-occupied residential properties for the current year.

In fact, there has been no increase for four years in a row, because this government was committed to keeping taxes as low as possible.

In 2007 we implemented a three-year freeze on assessments of owner-occupied residential properties. Then, in 2009, we introduced legislation to ensure that tax relief continued after the freeze. The legislation guarantees that, beginning this year, annual increases in these assessments

will be tied to the Consumer Price Index and capped at 5%. What this means is that homeowners are much less vulnerable to fluctuations in the market value of their property, and their property taxes will be much more stable and predictable for as long as they own their home.

I'm also pleased to advise that Islanders will have several new opportunities this year to better understand their property assessments and tax bills. A new format makes the bill easier to read and understand. An accompanying brochure provides information on how properties are assessed and taxes are calculated.

Islanders will have a chance to meet face to face with staff at the taxation and property records division at information sessions in their community. The sessions will be held May 11th till May 20th in Tignish, O'Leary, Summerside, Charlottetown, Montague and Souris. At the sessions, staff will answer questions on how the value of property is assessed, and how property taxes are calculated. They will begin at 3:00 p.m. and go until 7:00 p.m. People can drop in anytime during this period.

I would like to commend my staff for undertaking these new initiatives to improve service to Islanders.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Hospice Palliative Care Week

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to recognize this week as Hospice Palliative Care Week in Prince Edward Island and across Canada. Hospice

palliative care providers and volunteers are an integral part of our health care system. Their dedication and compassionate efforts in providing high-quality care to Islanders is admirable and truly appreciated by all of us.

Planning for palliative care is something that most of us would prefer not to think about, but unfortunately for many Islanders, this is a reality they cannot avoid.

Government's Palliative Home Care Drug Project, which was extended last fall, gives individuals the resources and medications they need to receive end-of-life care where they are most comfortable, including at home. The Palliative Home Care Drug Project is an extension of the Integrated Palliative Care Program, which aims to enhance client and family options for palliative care through access to trained, qualified health care teams in the most appropriate setting.

PEI's integrated Palliative Care Program includes individuals from various care settings, including home care, hospitals, long-term care, palliative care units, and hospice organizations such as the Hospice Palliative Care Association of PEI.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome members of the Hospice Palliative Care Association of PEI to the gallery today, including: Ellen Davies, Andrea Conway, Gloria Jean Murphy, Eleanor Davies, Barb Langille, Peter and Jean Lyon, Fran MacDougall, Casey McGannon and Doug Hagen. I would also like to welcome staff members of the Department of Health and Wellness integrated palliative care program, Winifred MacArthur and Blanche Ward, who are also with us today.

This year is the 25th anniversary of the Hospice Palliative Care Association of PEI. Since they began, they have provided care and support to patients and family members

during an extremely difficult time. I would also like to mention that, to mark this anniversary, the association has put together a cook book, which is for sale, called *A Little Taste of Heaven*.

I would like recognize and thank the Hospice Palliative Care Association of PEI, and all hospice palliative care providers, for their dedication, compassionate efforts, and ongoing commitment to bringing comfort and support to palliative patients and their family members.

In conclusion, I've had the opportunity to be at the PE home and to witness the wonderful work that's taking place, and to hear the great stories that are happening at home and all caregivers and those within the association. So thank you so much for all your work, and it's very much appreciated.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Kindergarten into schools update

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to stand in the House today to update the members and the public on the progress that is being made to move kindergarten into Island schools.

I indicated earlier, most schools have completed their kindergarten teacher placements. I would like to reiterate the commitment of the department and the three Island school boards in this process. The goal has been, and will always be, to ensure that the needs of the children are the number one priority when making decisions about where to place teachers.

As much as possible, the preferences of the teachers were taken into consideration. However, in some cases the needs of the children, and of the school, outweighed the geographical preferences of the teacher.

I am pleased to announce that there will be financial support for those kindergarten teachers who are working toward their B. Ed. Treasury Board has approved a payroll deduction program to assist kindergarten teachers in paying UPEI tuition fees. This program will be managed by school boards who will make payments directly to UPEI on behalf of the participants and make corresponding deductions to the new teachers' salaries.

To further support the kindergarten teachers in their transition into the school system, three important opportunities are being planned to help kindergarten teachers better understand the public school system. All kindergarten teachers will be invited to a provincial-wide information session with the PEI Teachers' Federation, school boards, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development later this month. An orientation for new members will be hosted by the department on the 31st, and the beginning teacher induction program will be offered later in September.

Another important element in the transition process is scheduling the Welcome to Kindergarten sessions. Welcome to Kindergarten is a great introduction to school and provides parents with helpful resources and great ideas for ways they can support their child's learning at home. During May and June, families will be invited to the school to participate in the Welcome to Kindergarten workshop, meet their kindergarten and school principal, and possibly see a kindergarten classroom.

Bringing kindergarten into the Island schools is an investment of approximately

\$7 million into our One Island Community, with our One Island Future and is the largest educational initiative in the modern history of our province. I am pleased to advise parents and the public that we are on target.

Having a full-day mandatory kindergarten program in our schools this fall will mean that all Island children will have the same learning opportunities as five-year-olds across the country.

The transfer of kindergarten and the renewal of the early childhood sector are both part of a major commitment that our provincial government will make to Island children and their families. We are looking carefully at how we can best support Island children, families and communities, to strengthen our early childhood sector and, in turn, our One Island Community and One Island Future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Conference on Contemporary Issues in Child and Adult Sexual Abuse

Ms. Sherry: Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to inform members of the House about a conference that is taking place today and tomorrow in Charlottetown.

The Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee is hosting a two-day conference today and tomorrow at the Rodd Charlottetown on contemporary issues in child and adult sexual abuse. The conference is sponsored by the Government of Prince Edward Island, Justice Canada and the Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee.

We are pleased to partner with the Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee to host this conference here in Prince Edward Island. I am pleased to say that there was an overwhelming response to the conference and all spaces are now full. With over 160 professionals from across Atlantic Canada who have registered, participants include social workers, counsellors, teachers, lawyers, child protection workers, nurses and police officers.

The conference provides professionals who work with sexual abuse survivors an opportunity to discuss and learn more about contemporary issues and best practices in child and adult sexual abuse.

Featured speakers include Dr. Roberta Sinclair, manager of research and development for the National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Ottawa, who will be speaking about Child Exploitation and the Internet. Liz Oscroftan, private psychologist from the University of Alberta, and Matilda Makara, a social worker from Edmonton, will be speaking on Working with Survivors of Sexualized Violence in Canada's Ethno-Cultural Communities.

The conference will wrap up on Friday afternoon with a presentation from Dr. Cathy Carter-Snell, coordinator of forensic studies at Mount Royal University in Alberta. Dr. Carter-Snell is a certified emergency nurse and sexual assault nurse examiner who will be speaking to the group on Understanding Physical and Psychological Effects of Sexual Assault. Dr. Carter-Snell's participation is timely as the province moves forward to implement a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program on the Island.

I know that this will be a great conference

with this excellent line-up of speakers and I look forward to speaking with the group tomorrow morning. I would like to wish the participants a productive and informative conference.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Agri-Food on Prince Edward Island-Update

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, it is now more than a year since the report of the Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Agri-Food on Prince Edward Island was released.

That landmark report outlines the next chapter for the agriculture and agri-food economy in this province. It is clearly stated that the current path is not sustainable and that new directions are needed if the industry is to prosper.

In releasing its report, the commission expressed the belief that the industry has a promising future. This government shares that belief and is working hard, in cooperation with all partners in industry and other governments, to ensure that the industry will prove to be that source of prosperity for the Island community.

The commission put forward 14 recommendations which focused on three major changes: the need to become more competitive, to become more sustainable and to become more collaborative.

Today I would like to provide an update on the actions being taken by the Department of Agriculture to carry out those

recommendations.

To ensure a more competitive industry, the department provided financial support for the establishment of an industry-led Prince Edward Island AgriFood Alliance. The Alliance has been actively and aggressively collecting market intelligence and exploring new market opportunities. The Alliance is also establishing an ambitious research agenda.

The department has strengthened its collaboration with other departments. One result of that is the establishment of a new Culinary Alliance, involving the departments of agriculture, tourism and fisheries and aquaculture.

We have developed a new on-farm energy program to help producers reduce energy costs. We have introduced a bio-economy crops program to provide new market opportunities. We are implementing new programs in the areas of research and innovation, food safety and quality and business development. We continue to support Future Farmers and the expansion of organic production. We support the work of the Agriculture Sector Council in attracting skilled workers.

In the area of environmental sustainability, amendments have been introduced to the *Prince Edward Island Lands Protection Act* to exempt environmentally-sensitive areas from the total land holdings. The ALUS program has been expanded and is now offered province-wide. We are working with farm organizations to strengthen their leadership roles.

The report of the commission provides a clear direction for the agriculture and agri-food industry in this province. Today I want to reaffirm the commitment of my department to continue to act upon these recommendations.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you Madam Speaker.

For the information of the House, I'd like to table the Drug Expenditure in Canada, for the last reporting year, from Canadian Institute of Health Information. It demonstrates that PEI has the highest percentage change of 13.9% in the public-prescribed drug expenditure per capita.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: That is seconded by the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Motions Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Sorry.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from

Montague-Kilmuir, that Motion No. 66 be now called.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 66.

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

WHEREAS the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, RSPEI 1988, Cap. F-15.01, was proclaimed into force on 1 November, 2002;

AND WHEREAS Section 42 of the Act states, in part, as follows:

42. (1) There shall be an Information and Privacy Commissioner who is an officer of the Legislative Assembly;

(2) The Commissioner shall be appointed by the Legislative Assembly.

(a) on the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Legislative Management; and

(b) following a resolution of the Legislative Assembly supported by at least two-thirds of the Members present.

AND WHEREAS the term of appointment of Ms. Rebecca Wellner, Information and Privacy Commissioner, expires on June 6, 2010;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee has reported to this House, unanimously recommending the appointment of Ms. Maria MacDonald of Charlottetown as part time Information and Privacy Commissioner;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly, pursuant to Sections 42 and 43 of the *Freedom of*

Information and Protection of Privacy Act, appoint Ms. Maria MacDonald of Charlottetown as Prince Edward Island's Information and Privacy Commissioner for a five-year term, effective 7 June 2010;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the position of Information and Privacy Commissioner be designated as part time.

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader to open debate on the motion.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Standing Committee on Legislative Management was charged with the responsibility of recommending to the Legislative Assembly, a person to be named as Information and Privacy Commissioner for Prince Edward Island.

Considering the matter of appointment of a new Information and Privacy Commissioner, your committee placed advertisements in Island newspapers seeking interested applicants. Eleven applications were received, seven of whom were invited to be interviewed. A subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Legislative Management comprised of hon. Kathleen Casey, Speaker, Jim Bagnall, Opposition House Leader, Sonny Gallant, Government House Leader, and Charles MacKay, Clerk of Legislative Assembly - these people conducted the interviews.

After careful consideration, your committee unanimously recommends that Ms. Maria MacDonald of Charlottetown be appointed as part-time Information and Privacy Commissioner for Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to welcome Ms. MacDonald to the Speaker's Gallery and wish her all the best

in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir to second the motion.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a great pleasure to second the motion. As a committee from legislative management, we were struck to deal with this issue of hiring a new Information and Privacy Commissioner. As the Government House Leader said, yourself, myself and the Government House Leader were all on this committee, along with the Clerk of the Legislature.

I have to say it was a real nice day of interviews because we had such excellent candidates that applied for this position. It's not too often that you can get government and opposition to be right on sync with the way we're thinking on the hiring of people through government or through the Legislature.

But I have to say that it was unbelievable the rating of the individuals, how close everyone was with that. It was a good process and dealt with good candidates.

It's my pleasure to second this motion and to congratulate Maria MacDonald for being the successful candidate to come out of our interviews. I realize that it has to go through the House, but I think that Maria had a fantastic interview and presented herself exceptionally well, and it sure paid off here today for Maria.

With that, I welcome Maria. I see she's sitting in the Speaker's Gallery. I know, Madam Speaker, that she will make a tremendous Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Any other members who would like to speak before I go to the member to close debate?

Mr. Bagnall: Can we have a standing vote on that, Madam Speaker?

Speaker: Sure.

The hon. Government House Leader to close debate on the motion.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd just like to once again congratulate Ms. MacDonald, and we're ready for the vote.

Speaker: Hon. members, a standing vote has been requested on this motion.

Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please ring the bells to call the members?

[The bells were rung]

Speaker: For those of you who are watching in the gallery and at home, a standing vote has been requested and at this time the members will be called. We'll have five minutes for them to come. They have five minutes to come to the House for the vote.

Hon. members, you've heard the debate on the motion.

Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: 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. Premier, the hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, the hon. Government House Leader, the hon. Member from Kellys Cross-Cumberland, 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. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, 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 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: Hon. members, as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island and the Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Management, it is my pleasure to welcome Maria MacDonald in her new role as the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

On behalf of all of the members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to wish you all the best of luck in your new role.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Opposition calls Motion No. 59.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 59.

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

WHEREAS a new Statistics Canada study claims that Canadians are decreasing their fitness levels, with substantially lower fitness levels in 2009 than in 1981;

AND WHEREAS with more youth experiencing a rise in health problems including childhood diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol, this represents a wake-up call to Islanders and Canadians to focus on losing weight and becoming more fit;

AND WHEREAS in 2007, this government administration campaigned on the promise of working with the education system to ensure a greater emphasis on physical fitness in school curriculum;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly encourage government to remain accountable to their promises, and commit to providing a renewed emphasis on promoting physical fitness and healthy lifestyle choices in public institutions, including schools and post-secondary institutions;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly recognize the importance of regular sport and fitness participation as an integral part of healthy living for all Islanders;

AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly further recognize and support the efforts of community-based health and sporting organizations, physical education teachers, coaches, sport volunteers and administrators as they carry out their mandates.

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

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Last summer we had the Canada Games here in Prince Edward Island and they went over really well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Leader of the Opposition: Each province in Canada did a really good job to have star athletes here and all their supporters and their coaches. We just finished with the Winter Olympics, and as recently as last week we had two very important people in the Legislature that had won gold medals for Canada.

But what this motion is about today is about ordinary Islanders and our families, our children. We wanted to put some attention on the whole area of physical fitness, both in organized sport but also in unorganized sport.

Sometimes we forget to congratulate all those volunteers and all the people in our communities that work so hard with sport teams or work so hard with sporting organizations to make sure that there are opportunities across PEI and our many communities for recreational activity.

Before we get started on the motion, when I think back a long time ago, one of those coaches that really made such a difference in

my own personal life was a man by the name of Mr. Allan Flood. We went through school consolidation, if you remember, PEI, in about 1968. I left a one-room school where we had absolutely no sporting activity other than being outside and running around and playing with kids from grade 1 to 8. When we finally had the opportunity to move to Morell we had a brand new school, Morell Consolidated School, with a gymnasium, where we hadn't had one in the past.

It was Allan Flood who was our first phys. ed. teacher when that school opened. He was an incredible young man -

Premier Ghiz: Great wife.

Leader of the Opposition: Absolutely. Yes, her husband. Great couple, and the whole family is from my area.

With Allan, he was one of the first people because many of us came from five or six different schools that never had any type of phys. ed. program. It was actually Allan that not only encouraged us to get active, but taught us so many sports that we wouldn't have had a lot of experience with. Allan would have been there or else we had another phys. ed. teacher by the name of Ruth Rogerson.

But between Allan and Ruth, so many activities that we, as country children, had never been exposed to. Even including gymnastics. So it was a wonderful opportunity, and before long the school became alive and so involved with recreational sports, especially during the recess breaks and our lunch hours.

I'm sure that each of us in this room can think of somebody when we were in school that was a phys. ed. instructor. Because often the phys. ed. instructors are the teachers that seem to have the people skills,

not only in terms of their great capacity to get people involved, but they seem to have great empathy and great ability to connect with children or young people on an individual basis.

When we think in our communities of community people that sometimes go out even when we all claim that we're so busy and we all think that, no, we don't really have the time to commit to either coaching or getting involved sometimes. We find it hard to even get all our kids to their games, whether it be a soccer game or a hockey game or whatever. But there are those people in our community that, even though they're extremely busy - and one couple that comes to mind in our present community in Morell that are involved in both minor hockey and baseball is Kevin and Stacey Ryan.

Kevin and Stacey have three children. Their youngest daughter is Allee and Allee is such a tremendous athlete. Kevin has his own business. Stacey from time to time has real health issues. Yet they're the first to be involved in the organization on a formal basis but they also often are the coaches and Stacey often becomes the manager to the organized sport, whatever it is.

I'm sure in each of our communities people can think of couples like that, that just give so much time. Another person over the years - I remember when he was a coach at the University of Prince Edward Island, as a soccer coach, was Mr. Gordie Wilson. We lucked out for many years. Gordie was the coach of our young girls' soccer team in our community. He had left the UPEI Panthers with that commitment and turned around and again, working with a group of young country girls, because of his belief in terms of physical exercise. But his strong belief in soccer was able to mould a real successful young girls' team to become provincial champions on numerous occasions.

Sport is good for physical activity but it's also good to teach teens networking skills. It also teaches communication. It also helps people to realize that sometimes it's not about whether you win or lose, it's actually whether you get on the field and play.

I'm sure people can remember coaches, especially those of us who have children and who have kids involved in sport, that have really made such a difference.

I can remember a coach from Souris by the name of Ross Young who did such a good job with football. Socky MacDonald, who did a lot of really good work in the area of football for years, as well.

Those are just a few names of people and often it's easy when we stop and we think about all the organized sports. But what's not easy is when we think of the recent report card that was just done on our Canadian kids and it's called: Canada's kids are still dangerously inactive. It was a report card that was just released in the last several weeks. I have actually a copy of what was reported through CTV and I believe that they said it the best.

Again, we grew up in a culture where it was important to be active in sports but we also grew up in a culture where we were all probably working. I know, in my own experience, because of growing up on a farm, we didn't have to worry about physical activity because we were always active doing farm work, whether that was putting in hay, bagging grain, milking dairy cows, etc. We didn't have to worry about not being active.

However, the culture's changed quite a bit. When this report card came out, Canada is really not in a very good place with our young children and children as young as zero to four years of age or five. Now they're calling our young children child

couch potatoes, which is not good at all.

According to this report and the news coverage - CTV, I felt, did it the best of all. What they had said on Tuesday, April 27th, was even the youngest of Canada's children, those under the age of five, are dangerously inactive, says a new report released Tuesday.

The 2010 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth finds that - even getting Canadian toddlers as baby coach potatoes, with less than half of our kids under five getting regular physical exercise as part of their daily routines.

This is extremely dangerous. I know for many of us, later in life we deal with issues around health and issues around not having the time. There's always a reason of why it's difficult to get the physical activity that we all need. But when our children, especially our toddlers, are being described as toddler couch potatoes, we are really heading for a bad place.

The report noted that children between the ages of one and five should participate in at least two hours of physical activity, mostly through unstructured, active play. But instead, many kids under five are spending about 89% of the day just sitting around instead of running.

The unfortunate part is many of these children are sitting, either watching TV, or sometimes they're also just sitting, perhaps playing with a computer game. Again, there's nothing wrong with computer games, but it's in moderation. Instead, what they're finding with a lot of the research is that children are not being active at all, and are spending huge hours either on the computer or watching television.

Already, the report noted 21% aged two to

five are either overweight or obese, putting many on the path to a lifetime of inactivity and weight problems. Studies show that children who are obese before six are likely to be obese later in childhood. It's estimated that overweight two to five-year-olds are four times as likely to become overweight as adults, Dr. Mark Tremblay, the chief scientific officer for Active Healthy Kids Canada, noted in the news release.

Right presently in PEI our health budget is over \$550 million. People often worry about the fact that our population's aging, but our population is actually getting sicker. When we look at - this is our young generation - we all know what happens with inactivity. If there are issues of being overweight, and then eventually obese, that also impacts on diabetes and other types of chronic illnesses. You can understand why most provinces, including our own, I'm sure was alarmed when this report card was done and released a few weeks ago.

Of course, it's not just toddlers who aren't moving around enough. The report card notes Canadian kids of all ages continue to spend more time on the couch than outside. Among the 21 grades assigned in the 2010 report card, key grades included: active play, an F; physical education, a C-; family physical education activity, D; proximity and accessibility to physical activity facilities, a B; usage of facility and programs, parks and playgrounds, a D.

Sometimes too, I know it's been an issue for a number of years, especially in Prince County, there's a beautiful high school and a junior high school, and many people in that community would love to probably participate in more sports. However, one of the issues again is around transportation after school. How do young people get to be able to stay at school and then get home after?

There are different issues that effect different provinces in different areas. Canada's kids got an F for physical activity levels for the fourth year in a row because only 12% of Canadian children or youth are meeting Canada's physical activity guidelines of 90 minutes a day. The authors say they've seen little progress in meeting the target of 17% by 2015 that was set by provincial and territorial government ministers responsible for physical activity, recreation and sport.

While 20% of boys aged 5 to 10 years of age, and 15% of boys age 11 to 14, the same can be said of only 5% of adolescent girls. The proportion of children and youth achieving 60 minutes of physical activity a day is a little better. Thirty-one per cent were meeting that target, but that still means the majority of kids are not meeting the target. The report continues that too much time is spent in front of screens.

In other areas of the report card, Canadian kids are given an F for screen time. Since 90% of children are still spending too much time in front of a television, computer or a video screen. We are cocooning inside the house, usually around some sort of media screen, Tremblay noted with CTV's Canada AM on Tuesday. Evidence shows that the amount some of the kids are spending sitting around in front of screens is on the rise. The group cites research that show that kids are now spending six hours a day in front of a screen during weekdays, and more than seven hours on-weekends.

You can imagine, especially in the toddler to age five group, for kids to be watching six hours of screens and sitting - and then the whole issue, of which I'll get to later - about our lifestyle and the type of foods that we choose to eat - you can see where it's going to put - if we think we have issues around health budgets right now, you can imagine what the health budgets of the future are

going to be. So it's dominating the amount of time that kids having available to them, and at the expense of what would have been, in the past, one of the best leisure playtimes of the day.

The report card notes that while research has found that kids living with household rules that limit screen use are exposed to nearly three hours or less of screen time per day, than those who don't have rules, with only 28% of Canadian children report having rules about how long they're allowed to watch TV. As well, while children under the age of two should spend no time in front of screens at all, 90% of children begin watching television before their second birthday, the report says.

Schools are still not stressing enough physical activity. The report card says schools are still not doing enough to get kids moving. Giving sport and physical activity opportunities at schools - they only received a C-. We have a huge variation in physical education, Tremblay explained. Some places are doing a fabulous job, while some places are not doing so well. The legislation and rules between provinces - the application of the rules varies enormously. Some kids are getting a great physical education experience, others are getting a very poor experience.

This year's report card also assigns an F for investment from the federal government, down from last year's C grade. While we're seeing some success stories and some national commitment to encourage sport and activity, spending at the federal level in real dollars per capita is half the amount that it was in 1986. You can see that it's not only in relationship to what our provincial governments are doing, but also our federal government. Again, in this whole area - it needs attention now and investment, especially if we're planning on getting our health budgets down, and not to have as

many people as sick as they are.

The report that was done - and when you think of Active Healthy Kids Canada and ParticipACTION - healthy habits start a lot earlier than you think. The early years are a critical period for healthy development. Research show lifestyle patterns before the age of five years predict obesity and health outcomes in later childhood and through adulthood. Sadly, 15.2% of two to five-year-old Canadian children are overweight, and 6.3% are obese. These overweight children are four times more likely to become overweight as adults. Less than half of Canadian children under five are getting regular physical activities as part of daily routines, meaning that many are already on the path of inactivity before they reach their fifth birthday.

While international guidelines vary, the consensus is all children aged one to five years should participate in at least two hours of physical activity every day, accumulating over many session through play, games, transportation, and recreation. Even though a number of children have bicycles, often you'll see the bicycle just sitting where it's always at in the garage and not being used. It used to be that as soon as children would come home from school, get off the school bus, have a chance to have a snack, maybe get their homework done, then the child would be outside playing or having neighbours over or going through that wonderful time with kids that they don't have a lot of things to worry about. I know our children used to always have the neighbours' kids over and they'd make forts outside and they'd be doing all kinds of things, whether it be in our woods or just having an organized game of soccer or whatever.

However, it's really sad now, because this is not the case any more. More and more of our children, they may be coming home,

getting off the bus, and instead of doing anything in a physical way they actually turn on the television set or turn on the computer screen, and sit there. The other one that I've noticed a lot lately are the hand-held devices that are small computer games that children seem to have, especially the adolescent or even a high school student. They spend lots of time on that.

Many children under five years old spend a lot of time in daycare settings where active play should be a routine, but recent research indicates that this isn't the case. In fact, one study reported that 89% of the day spent in a daycare may have also been sitting around. Canadian children are still glued to the screen. The 2010 Active Healthy Kids Canada report card once again assigns an F for screen time, as 90% of Canadian children are still spending too much time in front of a television, computer and video screen, instead of being physically active. Kids are accumulating six hours of time on weekdays and more than seven hours on weekend days, roughly equivalent to an adult's work week.

Again, when you think of, often, probably when a child's 10, or 11 or 12 they start to have a friend over for a night. It used to be that those kids would be outside or in the basement playing maybe indoor floor hockey, or whatever. Now a lot of the games the young people do are actually with a computer and many have two or three handheld sets so they're all sitting around playing the games. We're not saying that that should be cut out, but we certainly are trying to encourage people to do that in moderation.

For healthy development it's recommended that children under the age of two get zero screen time. However, 90% of children begin watching television before their second birthday. In 1971 the average age children began to watch television was four

years of age. Today it's five months. When you think of that, we really have to question how some things have been very positive with our ability to change our lifestyles. However, there are other things that it may be time to stop and take a good look at what we're doing, especially when you think of a five-month-old baby watching television for two hours.

Despite the effects of early childhood screen time exposure, new e-parenting products continue to surface. A recent survey shows four of the 10 best selling education apps in iTunes stores are designed for children under the age of four. A typical (Indistinct) eight to 18-year-old home contains on average 3.8 television sets, 2.8 DVDs or VCR players, a digital video recorder, two computers, and often more than two video game players.

Children and youth living with household rules about media use are exposed to nearly three hours less screen time per day than those that do not have rules. However, only 28% of children did report about having rules about how long they were allowed to watch television. Too much screen time is associated with negative psychological consequences, such as reduced academic achievement and sleep, engagement at a younger age in high risk behaviour such as smoking, drinking alcohol and having sex. Active video gaming is suitable replacement for sedentary activities, but it should not replace outdoor play or physical education.

For the fourth year in a row the 2010 report card awarded an F for physical activity level. Only 12% of Canadian children and youth are meeting the guidelines. If we take that 12%, you can imagine what that's going to mean if only 12% of five-year-olds are meeting the physical activities recommended for five-year-olds today, and, if that trend continues, where our health dollars are going to be going.

No Canadian province or territory is meeting the Canadian physical activity guidelines of 90 minutes of physical activity a day. It's notable that 31% of the Canadian children and youth are achieving international physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes a day. The inactivity crisis is particularly serious for girls. Only 5% of adolescent girls are meeting Canadian physical activity guidelines. However, 20% of boys age five to 10, and 15% of boys age 11 to 14, are meeting guidelines.

Physical activity doesn't just benefit children's physical health. Research shows that physical health can be associated with improving psychological well-being, reduced depression and anxiety level, and reduced bullying. When you think about all the issues that we have in our school systems, as well as not having enough physical education, such issues in all our schools, and apparently at a lower and lower age, the issue of bullying, and of course, improved self-esteem.

There's also importance in active play. Active play is free, unstructured activity such as running with friends at the playground, playing ball, collecting sticks in the woods. Active play is critical for the healthy development of children under age five as it builds social skills, imagination and self-esteem. It's been suggested that children require blocks of free time to plan, to pretend, to enact play as individuals in groups. Families, child care centres, schools and community settings are needed to provide safe, supervised but yet unstructured play space for active play where children and their peers can engage in physical activity of their own design.

Research indicates that at least half of the physical activity accumulated by children should be through active play. I know we often talk about the kindergarten program and the commitment of government moving

kindergarten into the school system. This is a positive opportunity for kids because it's still using a play-based curriculum, so although there will be structured time using the gymnasiums, there will also still be unstructured time where the children can actually play.

Again, at the community level, sport and physical activity opportunities at school received a C this year in the report card, which is down from a B- in 2009. Schools must provide a variety of physical activity and sporting opportunities that appeal to students with different interests, ability levels and ages. A report recently shows that preschoolers are products of their own environment, as physical activity levels increase when children have access to appropriate play area of green space, physical activity equipment and toys.

Often, you'll see, we used to have a number of parks, or sometimes not even the park but actually the school, where on the school playgrounds lots of equipment. Again, village kids that live close to the school, often you'll see them running around and playing with some of the school playground equipment. However, especially in the rural communities, sometimes it's an issue of having transportation to be able to get the child that's staying after school to just play with their friends or whatever home, so we have to start being very creative because in the end it's so important to have increased activity.

Ninety-six per cent of 24 major municipalities surveyed in Canada have a community level policy that hinders physical activity participation in children and youth. For example, advertise by-laws that state ball and hockey playing is prohibited. I don't think this is an issue in Charlottetown, but I'm sure it's an issue in other places, where you'll see people outside in a small community, maybe in the

subdivision, maybe having a game of ball hockey, but in some areas there's actually a law to stop this. Again, it makes you wonder and question laws like that. I know people have to worry about children's safety, but that's sort of a tradition that's been going on for a number of years, and usually in the subdivision people recognize that there's going to be children there and they're watching out for that.

Parents also need help. Parents need to keep the television out of the child's bedroom, institute screen limit times, and create opportunities for active outdoor play for their children and as a family. It used to be, I'm sure in your house as well as my own, that if a television set was in the home, there would be one television set. You wouldn't have a television set in a child's room, let alone two or three t.v. sets or a set in each person's bedroom, and now it seems like there's a computer in each bedroom, too.

Parents can set their children on the path of an active life with a healthy household habit. One study showed that four-year-old children with some home routines of regular family meals, adequate sleep and limited screen time had a 40% lower risk of obesity. Using active transportation to get to and from school is one of the easiest ways to incorporate physical activity into one's day. Parents need to walk their kids to school more often.

There's a disconnect between what parents think their kids are doing and what they're actually doing when it comes to physical activity. A 2007 survey found that when parents and children of the same family were asked whether they were engaged in family physical activity at least once a week, their answers were very different. Sixty per cent of adults reported that it was true while only 25% of children corroborated the claim. Parents must take responsibility for their children's activity levels. They should

encourage their child to get involved in sport teams or clubs at school, advocate for physical fitness education classes and active opportunities to be offered every day at school, and involve their youngest family members in active family chores such as raking, vacuuming and gardening.

I was watching one time, there was a piece of research that demonstrated a school that actually started to use physical activities for at least 20 minutes a day before they then did their math curriculum. Over a period of time the young people's academic scored actually increased, not to mention their attention level, feeling better about themselves, etc. So again, it's important that we're very creative when it comes to trying to get people involved in physical activity.

The health of all Islanders is incredibly important. Fitness is the key attribute of health. It is very clear that investing in the health of our citizens is saving money in the long term. With that said, we're not convinced this government has done enough in this area yet. Government needs to demonstrate not only their interest of getting people active, but also they promised changes in school physical education programs in 2007 but we haven't seen the results of that yet. We need to hold them accountable to the public because, also, every dollar invested here in early intervention and wellness is going to help save not only health dollars but the quality of life for so many people.

The comprehensive Canadian Health Measures Survey claimed that obesity rates have soared among teenagers and adults, with the proportion of both teenaged boys and girls at risk for health problems more than tripling in the last three decades. The executive director of Obesity Canada has stated that these findings have grave implications, especially for teens.

We cannot afford to take a risk like that with our youth. Sadly, the recent national report claimed that even our youngest children, as I previously mentioned, under the age of five are dangerously inactive. The 2010 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth stated that less than half of Canadian toddlers are getting regular exercise.

Again, this is such a serious issue because so many of these children are spending almost 89% of their time during the day inactive. The report claims that children between the age of one and five should participate in two hours of physical activity every day, mostly through unstructured play, whether it's kicking a ball around the backyard, playing tag or riding a bike.

I'm sure that most people in the House remember all the kids games we used to play. You know, from red rover, red rover to different kinds of kids games. From playing tag outside, etc. I can remember, it would take people all night to try and get kids in the House.

The report further states that 21% of Canadian children aged two to five are overweight or obese. This will put many children on the path to a lifetime of inactivity and weight. Government has to step up now. We really look forward to further help and support, especially in the area of trying to increase the physical activity in each of our school. We need to nip the problem in the bud.

It's no secret that humans reap tremendous benefit from regular exercise. In fact, physical activity performed on most days of the week reduces the risk of developing or dying from some leading causes of illness and death.

I know there's a couple of people in the Legislature that really do take that serious,

whether it's the Member from Stratford-Kinlock or the Member from Kellys Cross-Cumberland. I often see her coming from an exercise class, especially on the evenings. I know each of us - I always have great intentions and sometimes get in the routine of getting at least a walk in early in the morning. I find, especially where I live, because we do have coyotes, etc., it's really - in the spring and summer when it's light out, at least at five in the morning, it's a lot easier than when the darkness is there year-round. It's so important that we take this responsibility seriously.

Regular physical activity improves health in the following ways: It reduces the risk of dying prematurely; reduces the risk of dying from heart disease; reduces the risk of developing diabetes; reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure; helps reduce blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure; reduces the risk of developing colon cancer; reduces feelings of depression and anxiety; helps control weight; helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints; helps older adults become stronger and better able to move without falling; promotes psychological well-being.

Studies have shown that regular exercise treats some depression as well as medication actually does. Fitness has a number of really positive off-shoots, so positive that we cannot ignore them.

Although wellness is important for everyone, we ought to start by cultivating it in our own children. Exercise is a real investment for everyone and our children deserve a good start. That's why we ought to hold government and keep them to commit to their 2007 promise that children need more physical education in schools.

Extensive studies show that regular physical activity provides young people with

substantial mental, physical and social benefits. Engagement in play and sport gives young people opportunities for natural self-expression, self-confidence, tension relief, achievement, social interaction and integration, as well as for learning the spirit of solidarity and fair play. Regular physical activity therefore improves children's overall health and contributes to their growth and development.

As well, improvements in discipline, academic performance, and self-concept are other benefits associated with regular physical activity. Children are naturally inclined to exercise but need their parents or care providers, daycare centres, kindergartens and schools to help make sure they do this on a daily basis.

Otherwise, many children can and are falling more susceptible to more sedentary form of play. Children are 40% less active than they were 30 years ago. The consequences of this behaviour is affecting the health of our children negatively. We need to do something about this as quickly as possible before it is too late.

In opposition we lobby hard for greater commitment to sport. Government must commit to providing a dynamic and inclusive sport and recreation environment that encourages and enables all Islanders to experience and benefit from involvement in sport and recreation.

Opposition members value sport and the quality physical education programs in the province. Opposition members recognize the important role that schools can play in helping children develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to live healthy lives.

A number of school, especially schools that are really supportive with the community and back, the schools actually open early in the morning and open late in the evening.

This is great because it is a community facility and it would be nice to see all our schools open even more hours than they are.

Sport and physical education are therefore key components in our education system. In the face of small school closures across the province, government must continue to offer quality physical education programs which help children to achieve success and enjoyment in a variety of physical activities. I know the minister of education has promised to bring sporting equipment to our school in Mount Stewart and we look forward to him fulfilling that promise.

According to the World Health Organization, physical inactivity is one of the 10 global causes of death and disability. In November of 2005 the previous government administration released a strategy designed to increase physical activity among Islanders. The Prince Edward Island physical activity strategy followed up on the healthy living strategy and the commitment of federal, provincial, territorial ministers to increase physical activity levels 10 percentage points by this year 2010.

The benefits of physical activity are tremendous, far-reaching, affecting our overall health as well as well-being and contributing to community development, and reducing our ever increasing health care costs.

There is a collective responsibility of individuals, parents, schools, communities, employers, organizations and government to support opportunities for increased physical activity and explains many of the benefits a physically active lifestyle has to a population.

Up to a whopping 25% of all medical costs can be attributed to smoking, obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition.

Therefore, creating increased opportunities for Islanders to participate in physical activity and ensuring proper facilities to support physical activity are critical to decreasing health care costs, creating a healthy workforce, supporting the growth and development of our young people, and proving the overall wellness of society.

Healthy people are productive people. Ensuring a healthy workforce would up growth on the Island, reduce the amount of money paid out in government programs that have to go to health because we're not healthy, and create a more pleasant atmosphere for everyone.

Health care costs, of course, would drop. When there's much less likelihood of illness there will be dollars left over that we no longer need to spend on health. It's simple math. Spend a little more here and save a lot more down the road. Not to mention the individual person's quality of life.

As well, studies show that healthy bodies are more keen to retention and critical thinking. Our students need to be healthier in order to excel. Government must encourage Islanders to take responsibility for their individual health including adding adequate fitness to their daily routine. By walking on the provincial wide Rail-to-Trail or choosing to take a family hike through the woods, Islanders young and old can enjoy the added benefits of regular physical activity.

These are just the obvious benefits of health. Further benefits include bonding with family and friends, developing social skills, and getting a little Vitamin D. All we need is government to continue with its commitment to ensure that this happens.

I look forward to hearing everybody in the House speak to this motion and support it unanimously.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker (Biggar): I now call upon the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir to second the motion.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is a great motion, because it deals with physical activities of individuals, children, youth, adults and everyone. Being in such great physical condition as I'm in, it really goes to deal with the heart of this motion. I look at, when we talk about physical activity, what's happening in our society today.

We find that if you go outside in the playgrounds today you see very few kids out there any more. You see there are very few. What's happening is today has gone more to the computers, Facebook and Twitter and whatever they're on as far as activities are concerned. You'll find that the kids will come in after school, and instead of dropping their school bags and running outside to play like we did as children, they get on the computer. They're on the computer for an hour, an hour-and-a-half, talking to their friends, but with very little physical activity. Most times you see that they've either got a pop in their hand, or they're eating something while they're sitting at the computer and not getting any exercise.

We look at our society and we find - we as individuals and adults and government, as a matter of fact, can put the facilities in place. We can put the facilities in place. We can build new soccer fields. We can build a new wellness centre - like I have in my district - and a new soccer field. We can put these facilities in place. We have the pool, the weight rooms, and all of this, but we can't take them by the hand and lead everybody

there to make sure that they're participating in all this physical activity.

Governments - both governments, the federal government and provincial government - have done a lot to put facilities in place across this province. The infrastructure programs that we've had over the years have helped small communities, areas right from one end of the province to the other, to put new facilities in place, to put walking tracks. When we're talking about rinks today, we really don't even talk about a rink today, we talk about a wellness centre. We talk about the fitness that we put in it, like our new wellness centre in Montague, for instance. We have two walking tracks in it, actually. It's unbelievable the amount of adults and older people that are using the track and the walking tracks, but you'd be hard-pressed to find many youth there. You'd be hard-pressed to find many youth walking the walking track. Although we are promoting wellness, but we're still not getting our youth to do these things.

Matter of fact, a number of years ago, and since I've been in, we built the Rails to Trails. The Rails to Trails in Montague, they have a tremendous walking track where you can walk down along the Montague River - beautiful scenery - and it's a great walk. If you want to continue, you can walk all the way straight through to Georgetown or Cardigan, and it's a great trail. We have a lot of people using that. It's unbelievable the amount of people that you will get walking the Confederation Trail, leaving from the Montague waterfront and heading that way. It's just tremendous the amount of use that trail is getting. It's probably one of the heaviest used locations of the Confederation Trail of anywhere in the province. In that particular span between Montague and Cardigan, there is constantly people on that track walking daily. It's great to see that happening. We have to look at that.

We didn't have proper soccer fields a number of years ago in our area. We've built two major soccer complexes, one alongside of the other, and I think we have maybe six regulation soccer fields in the one facility with all the irrigation and stuff. We have it set up for the children. We do have a great soccer program. But I understand the numbers are starting to drop off a bit in that. It's not what we want to see, because we want to see our youths continue to do it.

Another program that used to be, and was always really good, was the softball program. There used to be a softball program for kids. That's dropping off. The softball on PEI, in the last number of years, has dropped off immensely. At one time you could have 30 or 40 intermediate ball teams, and there may be one or two today, or very few. That activity is gone. A lot of those players in those days are the baby boomers, for instance. When softball was big they've moved on and they're too old to play those games now, but there are no younger people coming in to fill up those areas. Especially in the boys - the boys' programs have dropped off immensely. The girls' softball program across PEI is continuing to flourish, but still not as strong as we'd like to see it. That's because now with soccer taking over on PEI, the softball program has kind of dropped off a bit. Anyway, that's part of what's happening out there.

When you find that the activity levels of children are dropping off, you will find that kids are a little - I don't like saying obese, but they're bigger. They're not getting the exercise that, when I was a kid, I got. You were on the go constantly. You were playing sports constantly or you were doing something. We didn't have computers to sit in front of. We didn't have cable t.v. 24 hours a day. We didn't have the dishes out there where they can get TV all the time. And sit in the house - we weren't allowed to. We came home - you either went to work

or you get out of the way so they wouldn't find you so you wouldn't have to go to work. Because if they caught you - when you grew up on a farm - I can guarantee you - you get exercise all right. You were in the barn shovelling -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - it's great manure for the water, you know. We did a lot of that. That's what we did when you grew up on the farm.

Mr. LeClair: You still do that here.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, yeah. There'd be some people that would think that probably. But the thing happens is that there was activity. I grew up where we had potatoes on the farm, so chances are when you got home for school you went to the warehouse or you went to the cellar or wherever our potatoes were, and you graded. You were handling product and you were - lots of exercise.

Today the kids don't have that. Even the farmers today, when you look at it - you don't see them forking potatoes like they used to. You don't see them lifting bags. A lot of them use a front end loader or tractor or they have it in a bulk box and they run it through. There's very little manual labour. The potatoes are maybe boxed up now and put in big boxes and dealt with, but there's very little manual labour compared to what it used to be years ago. I think that all has a bearing on the activities across the province.

Even the track-and-field programs today in the high schools and in the - it's not as big as it was years ago. We can't seem to get kids to participate in activities, other than a few. You'll get the sports teams in the school - they're having a harder time today filling the rosters with teams and getting individuals to participate. Some of their star athletes, they can't even get out like they

would, and it's a shame. Because I know last year in track-and-field there were really good athletes that wouldn't bother going to practice and wouldn't participate. It's kind of tough when that happens.

I go back to my granddaughter, she's one of those that is very active. She would participate in sports almost every day of the week if she gets a chance. She's involved in track and she's involved in softball and she's involved in ringette, so she's going in sports pretty well all the time and she participates in the school programs, and works at it. But she also is one of those ones that will get on the computer and will sit there for a while, too, if she's allowed to. But you have to say that you can't be on the computer all the time, and you've got to be - although there's a lot of good stuff you can do on the computer. I mean, if you're doing projects for school and you're researching your project, then the computers are really good for you.

But what we're finding is an awful lot of them are on Facebook, and it's unbelievable the amount of peer pressure that gets on the individuals when they're on there, so it's not really good to be on the computer like that all the time. That's what's difficult.

I look at Wellington where they just lost their new arena. That was a big loss to the community, a recreational facility, and when you get communities like that, that's where people congregate. They come to the rinks, or they come to - and I'm sure that when this new facility comes up it will be like a wellness centre, and they'll have a walking track in it, and they will be doing their part, along with governments, federal and provincial, to make sure that they put a facility in place that will look after the needs of the community.

As I said earlier, regardless of how much governments put into it, and how much the

communities put in it, it takes the parents, it takes the individuals, to be committed to using the facilities and to make sure that their children or their families are using those facilities that we make available for them. In Montague we're very lucky. We have also, active - we have the pool. So there's swimming facilities there, and there's weight, there's exercise equipment and everything there for wellness, for people, which is being highly used. But we have to continue to keep this going.

But what happens is when people don't exercise it becomes a burden on our health systems. It becomes a burden on our health systems because high blood pressure, overweight, stress to your heart, and all of these keep your blood flowing. You need exercise. But if you're not doing any of that, then we're going to have more heart attacks, we're going to have more high blood pressure, we're going to have more strokes, we're going to, just our overall health-wise, we're going to have more diabetes if we're sitting in front of a t.v. eating candy and drinking pop all the time without having any exercise. All of these things are going to affect our health and our activities. That's very important when we look at all of these areas.

In order to help our physical activities, we have an awful lot of coaches. We have a lot of volunteers that do spend a lot of time working with individuals, with kids, with adult teams, with anything that puts a lot of time into the coaches who help work on these issues. It's very easy for someone to stop doing exercises for a while and just to say: It's kind of nice to sit in front of the t.v. But step on the scales in a month's time and look at what's happening. I can tell you, the scale is going to go up. If we don't continue to do that, then we're putting our health system in danger of not having enough money to really look after the issues that we have to look after.

Obesity is on the incline for the last number of years, and Canada has been on a steady increase in the last 25 years. It has grown probably in leaps and bounds. Every time you see a health study and they're talking about physical conditions, Canadians are not ranking up there in the top of the list like we should be. I mean, we should be the top of the world as far as activity is concerned. We have so much land, and so much open space here, that we should be really there but what's happening is we're in the world of IT, and as I said, they're not getting that exercise any more. It's really helping.

One of the biggest causes of diabetes is not enough exercise. What happens is diabetes is continuing to grow in this country, and we are looking at, because of the diabetes, more heart attacks, more high blood pressure, cancer, gall bladder diseases, everything. It all boils down to inactivity, not the proper exercise, because if you are doing the proper exercising with your proper diet, you will burn off your calories on a daily basis and you will not be putting on excessive weight and dealing with what we have to deal with.

Among the young people the biggest increase is between the age of 12 and 17. If you can imagine, that's our biggest increase in obesity today, that age group. Can you imagine? If we could get that age group more exercise, proper eating habits, keep away from the junk food, keep away from the, we would have a better group of individuals health-wise. But what we're finding is that excessive weight causes fatigue, tiresome. What that does, too, it takes away the alertness of students in school because if you're sharp, if you're well-exercised and well-dieted, you will be sharper in school, your mind will be more clear, you won't be as tired, you will be able to function at a greater and higher level. That's what we have to be able to do in order to make these things take place.

Who's the role player in all of this? We are, or we should be, for our youth. We should be the role player that's promoting that we have more activity, that our children are better fit, that our children have better diets, but sometimes our role-playing is not the best because, as an adult, a lot of times we tend to overeat, we eat junk food, we do all the things we're not supposed to do. So how do we explain to our children that you shouldn't be doing those things when you're doing them yourself? They're going to say: You're a great one to talk about not having pop or junk food, you eat it yourself. You're doing it. We're supposed to be role models, but what happens is that priorities get moved away from the actual facts of what has to take place.

We have a province of only 140,000 people, and we have a lot of work to do on this issue, but we also have done a lot of work. Anytime you look at the facility, when you put recreation facilities and the amount of recreation facilities that we've put in small communities across the province, that's probably one of the legacies that's going to come from the Canada Games in this province, is that we've put a lot of sport facilities and recreational facilities across this province. From the new track and soccer complex out at UPEI to the new ballfields in Cardigan to the new ballfield up in O'Leary or Tyne Valley, these will all pay dividends for us in the future. A lot of communities, straight across the province, had a chance with the Canada Games being here, to upgrade facilities.

Not only did we build new facilities, but we had an awful lot of facilities that were upgraded. I look out at Stratford, and Stratford had the first indoor soccer complex here in Prince Edward Island, and maybe one of two or three in Atlantic Canada that's available. This will allow athletes to participate 12 months of the year, 24 hours a day, really, if there's enough people that

want to use it.

While I'm here, I'd like to welcome Helen MacDonald to the Legislature, a former colleague and a great friend, and actually a relative. We sure miss her here and wish she was here with us, but it's great to see her here and I know that she's getting along great.

So when we look at the levels of our facilities and the levels of our exercise here in the province, we do a lot. Getting back to the Canada Games, although they are elite athletes they leave a lasting impression on every other youth in this province of what could happen if they decided to participate in physical activity and participate to their ability along with the ones that are actually doing it.

I also look at our provincial teams. We look at Heather Moyse from the Olympic team. She's an inspiration now to every individual on Prince Edward Island and an influence to our young community of what can happen when you want to participate with recreational and physical activities. To get athletes like that it doesn't come easy. There's a lot of hard work that goes with being a professional class athlete.

I look at Brad Richards who's a young individual from Murray Harbour. Left home after he finished peewee hockey at the age of 14. He moved away to better his career. Not only did he give up his friends in his community, his parents, his family and moved to another area because he believe in what he could accomplish and what he could do with the proper training and the proper physical activities. He's a superstar today in the NHL. He's a superstar as far as Prince Edward Island is concerned. Just like Heather Moyse was a superstar in her sport and Eli MacEachern was a superstar in his sport when he was playing in bobsledding.

These athletes have gone over and above the exception. What it is, is dedication. It's dedication to what you believe in. It's dedication to their abilities. I can guarantee, you take those athletes when they were performing that there wasn't any excess fat in any of those athletes. They were in top physical condition. They were muscle toned and in just excellent form.

A lot of members here, where I look around the room, played a lot of sports. I can remember the minister of tourism, in his heyday, was not a bad softball pitcher. He worked hard at it. At that time we had the King's Castles and we kind of beat them up quite often. But anyway, he did get better at his sport, over and over, and when King's Castles were no longer there, he actually won a few games.

But not only that. He payed the price for 15 or 20 years of playing, turned around and volunteered time after that, to the coaching ranks and put the time and effort into not only (Indistinct) participated, but now to help other individuals get their goals in activities.

I look at the member from Vernon River. He was a good athlete in his day and he spent a lot of time playing sports, and a very good athlete. He grew up in a family where there was a bunch of boys in the family. They were all little fellows, about six foot six. He had to learn how to handle himself pretty quick in those days or he'd be kind of pushed aside. I know when I played hockey against him, the only way you could stop him was cut him down. So my shoulders were sore carrying a hockey stick after chasing him around the ice.

But it's conditioning and it's what you want to do as an individual when you play. Do you want to sit in front of the t.v. at home? It's so easy to walk in the house when you get home at night and put the feet up and

throw on the t.v. and stay home. The older you get, the tougher it gets to get out and do things that you like to do.

I look today and I think about when I was coaching, as a young man with small kids. Coaching a couple of teams, refereeing and playing hockey. I look at it today and I wonder where the time ever came, how you could take that time to volunteer and plus work full-time. It's a matter of putting your priorities straight. It's a matter of scheduling your time and what you want to do. Unbelievable what you can do when you put your mind to it.

Somebody always said to me: If you're looking for somebody to coach kids or you're looking for somebody to work with children, look out and find the busiest person that you can find in the community. The guy that's the busiest and is working the hardest in the community. He will be the best guy to get because he knows how to value his time and he knows how to work at whatever you want to do.

We can go on about physical activities and the initiatives of physical fitness for years on this issue because there are so many good things that we can do without taking medications. It's just exercise. Exercise and physical activity. It's the best medicine in the world for people that are growing up and moving forward.

I talk about my wife, for instance, when the new wellness centre opened. She walked five miles a day, every day, all winter. She'd get up and spend five miles a day in the new - four days a week, she was walking five miles a day and then the other days she was skating for an hour. But that's physical activities. What happens? You feel better and it works.

I guess I can continue to talk here but I want to make sure that other members have a

chance to get up and talk to the physical activities that are going on in this province and what's going on in our communities and what they are doing themselves to promote a better health care and health system in this province.

With that, I'm going to wrap up my speech and allow others to participate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: I'll just go quickly to the Leader of the Opposition for recognition of guests.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just want to recognize Helen MacDonald, another mentor of mine. Spent a good year with Helen, wonderful woman from Summerside, and it may be her granddaughter that's with her. So welcome today.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Would anyone else like to speak to the motion?

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Before I speak to the resolution, it's a privilege - I'd like to welcome Helen MacDonald and family to the gallery today. Nice to have her here.

It gives me pleasure to speak to this resolution as Minister of Health and Wellness in the province. This is a very positive resolution in terms of what we have to do as a province for all ages across the spectrum.

We, as ministers of health and wellness, ministers of sport, across Canada have been working very diligently over the last couple of years, and I have the pleasure of still being sport with our new department, under wellness. The sport and recreation division is part of Health and Wellness in PEI now.

We have been working very hard to work as ministers across Canada, territories and provinces, with the federal government, to realize and to be committed and stay committed to improving activity levels for our youth, our children. Not just youth. To actually improve physical activity rates for our entire population. Here in the Maritimes, in the Atlantic, I know the former minister of sport from Newfoundland and myself and other ministers, we're really committed to doing this because the rates are very high for inactivity in the Atlantic region, for children especially, probably based, too, on the rural nature of our populations and the accessibility to programming to facilities.

But I think we also have a unique opportunity as being mainly rural based in Prince Edward Island, that we have a beautiful province to live in. Wonderful clean environment in which to live, and it is exciting because I think there's a lot of great things happening. I know the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, when he seconded the resolution, spoke about the supports for recreational infrastructure in the province. It has been quite significant over the last many years. But even in the last few years - and I can speak to this. Now it's with the minister of rural development, but under the Island Community Fund it was a very positive and it still is an extremely positive program for our rural communities and all communities across Prince Edward Island.

For everyone to understand, there used to be a program with the federal government infrastructure which was called the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund. Those

monies ran out and the new infrastructure monies did not apply to recreational infrastructure.

We took an initiative here on Prince Edward Island to create an ICF fund - an Island Community Fund - along with the member also from the minister's department, rural development, of community development fund as well. But those dollars are going in to extremely important recreational infrastructure in our communities that otherwise wouldn't have been supported under these mainstream programs of federal provincial programs and municipal programs.

You just look at playgrounds that are being supported across the province. Rinks. I will also say that since we actually implemented the Island Community Fund, the federal government did come in line with some dollars through a rink program, and that has supported additional dollars for some of those projects. I have to say PEI did take an initiative with the \$27.5 million over five years to have as the Island Community Fund, and it's been very positive to provide that infrastructure to rural communities. I know a lot of members in this House, their districts, their communities, have been impacted by that. We need to ensure that we provide those important infrastructure places, and safe places for our children and families of all ages and seniors across Prince Edward Island.

We can't dismiss, though, the facts that are out there. The facts are true, that we do have a serious issue around activity levels for our children. We have committed, as ministers of sport across the country, that by 2015 we are going to significantly see an improvement to the average steps taken per day. Right now, we're looking at a little over 11,000 steps per day in our children, according to that study that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was talking about in the

can play study, too, that was done. We're going to improve that, but we need to do a lot of work to get to that.

I know the resolution's talking a lot about education. It's talking about the department of education. As the department of sport and recreation, we want to work collaboratively with any department and government to see and help realize these rates to go up in terms of steps taken by our children - obviously, to see the decrease in the obesity rates in PEI. I think we cannot dismiss the good things that are happening out there, and there are great things.

I know the minister of education will probably speak to that, but there are great things happening in classrooms across the province - educators, staff, individuals in schools that are doing lots of good work at the front line to help and work with children. But not just that, it's also working with families. I know Take 30 for the Family was a very positive initiative, but we have work to do.

Like I said, probably a couple of weeks ago, we're going to be launching our very - and the treasurer - it was in his budget speech - we've been working really hard in collaboration with Recreation PEI over the last several months. We're going to have a very exciting initiative launch next week, which is going to really impact this, and set us in a new direction no PEI. Not just for kids, but for every Islander across PEI to get excited and to get involved and get active. I can't talk a lot about it, because it's next week, but we're really pleased with the work that has been done across the province on that.

We have accessed dollars, and it's been creatively done, too. We get bilateral support, bilateral money. The province puts in about - I think we're putting in about \$150,000 into that, through the sport

bilateral - and the federal government is supporting us, and Recreation PEI is the NGO that we're working with. It's going to be exciting. We're hoping that people are going to really grab a-hold of this and see the value.

Like the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir talked about, chronic illness is a reality on Prince Edward Island, and our statistics are ever increasing. If we don't tackle the issue around obesity and physical activity, especially within our children, we're not going to see those chronic illness stats go down in the province. We need to do something now. We won't probably see statistics change - in maybe five, ten years we'll see some positive things. But if we don't start now, we'll never see them.

I'm really pleased with the progress that the department has made in regards to working with Recreation PEI, to be part of this positive initiative that government's going to be a partner in. It's very important, though, that we discuss this, that the resources are allocated to support this. We can't dismiss the realities that are in our province. Like I said, we have to ensure that the infrastructure is there.

But it's not just about infrastructure, we have to encourage families too, and families are very busy these days, as well. I know we talk a lot about technology and screen time, but there are some positives that are coming out of technology, in terms of getting kids active too. We have to look at it both ways.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct).

Ms. Bertram: Yes, and maybe the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir uses that Wii set. But yes, there are some really positive technologies that are helping and assisting in exciting kids to get physically active.

Within our sport and recreation and healthy living division - and this is the exciting part is that when the Premier decided to make this department health and wellness, I find it's very positive, because now we can link and marry the two. That health is just not out alone, that we're linking that wellness agenda to health. The education component on that side of wellness is going to be key.

There have been lots of great initiatives done within the department of health, whether it's the healthy living strategy, linked with our previous department, and collaboration has taken place. But now they're together and now we can -

Speaker: If you don't mind -

Ms. Bertram: No. That's okay.

Speaker: The hon. Premier for recognition of guests.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a former colleague, Helen MacDonald, to the gallery. She was a great supporter of my father back in the day, she used to tell me all the time. I don't know what happened - something you know - woke up on the wrong side of the bed one day - and then joined the Pat Binns' team and was elected to this Legislature for a while.

Then saw the light when she met me in the Legislature and decided not to re-offer again, and got out of the way of the big red tide. Not sure where she is now - she could still be with the bad guys, the Progressive Conservatives. But hopefully she's keeping an open mind and maybe we'll be able to lure her back. Obviously she's open-minded. To be able to change parties once, you can do it twice. It's great to see her here in the gallery today. Welcome back.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Just to go back to our division of sport, recreation and healthy living - going back to the idea that we're now as one department linked together. I think a lot of - even our staff at our department are very happy with that initiative. How we're going to be setting policy direction - I know the Leader of the Opposition was talking policy of that the other day, and this is where we have to move towards. Because if we don't see chronic illness go down, if we don't see statistics relative to physical activity go up, we're going to have a serious issue with the future.

I am very excited and I'm also inspired by a lot of people that are out there working day to day, whether it's within our rec division, community leaders. There are so many positive things that are happening. I see great things even in our local schools. The Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park was talking about how his former school is going to be used as a community building, and the good things that are going to happen. That's what we have to ensure, that those facilities exist within our communities after hours.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about that study. If you look at the 3:00 in the afternoon to 6:00 in the evening, that's the key time that we need to target to get kids active. It's true. If you look at kids back in 1981 when they first looked at statistics on this, that was when kids were very active. Kids were playing outside at 3:00 to 6:00 in the evening. Hopefully they were doing their homework as well. But it was just different. Now, with technology, things have changed.

How do we get kids active? How do we work with families? We just have to work with what our world is right now. I think as long as we can ensure that the opportunities exist, that they're being delivered within communities and localized, that's important, because we want to ensure that proximity for families, for children, for our seniors.

I'm just amazed, if you go out to the CARI complex and you go and see those swimming classes that are taking place there, and you see seniors that are in the pool doing aqua fitness. It's incredible. Or you go up to the Credit Union Place in Summerside. It's just amazing, the individuals walking the track. I know the Member from Montague-Kilmuir talked about the new wellness centre in Montague.

It's true, we're going towards wellness centres. A fully integrated facility within a community and larger communities.

Mr. Bagnall: You were listening.

Ms. Bertram: Yes, I was listening, but it's positive. Even the library is part of that component.

An Hon. Member: Listen and do.

Ms. Bertram: So in families - and government was really pleased to support that initiative, and the province did put quite a - I believe it was 2 or \$3 million into that project.

Premier Ghiz: Always putting more money into that riding.

Ms. Bertram: It's a positive example when you have libraries and rinks and tracks that everybody - the whole family - meaning even the intergenerational family can be part of a facility. But it's also about the outdoor experience on PEI. We have a Confederation Trail system on PEI that's

second to none.

Also, it's the infrastructure. Take the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. I'm speaking in my own community of Hunter River, what those sidewalks have meant for the community. They are lit in the evening. People are out, and it's been very positive for the community. I look at the promenade in North Rustico. People are out walking that. If you look at the national parks system, and other members in the House that have the national parks system as part of their districts, you know the wonderful natural areas that they provide for families, for individuals to get active. The infrastructure that's been put into Dalvay. It's going to be put into the Cavendish area this summer. People are rollerblading, they're jogging, they're running, they're walking, they're biking, cycling. That's what it's all about.

We have the opportunity here to be a lead, because we are a small province. We have a population of 140,000-plus people, and we can treat ourselves like an - we're just one jurisdiction and we have such a -

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Ms. Bertram: I call the hour Madam Speaker, sorry.

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

We'll stand recessed until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Government Motions

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

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

I want to introduce you to the great people of District 5 Vernon River-Stratford: Paul Wisener, Pat LeCoure, Sharon McNally, Kay Furness, Isabelle and John MacKinnon, Al Sorvino, Barry Smith, Audrey and Doug Lea, and Maria and Fred Martens. They're here to watch the proceedings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Docherty: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Not to outdo the hon. member from across the House, but District 17 Kellys Cross-Cumberland is also quite pleased to have some of the representatives from our executive, poll captains and members at large. We're lucky enough to have Darlene MacDonald, Maxine Holmes, Crystal McCloskey. We have Heather Dixon, Moe Monaghan, David McCloskey, Allan MacDonald, Donald MacLellan. We have the wonderful Norman MacDonald with us. Charlie Sherren, and I believe James Shaw, I just can't quite see him. So I'm assuming James is there.

We had a fantastic supper together and, of course, it was great to have the MLAs that came to say hello.

Oh, is Harvey there, too?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Ms. Docherty: And I've got Peter, sorry, Peter Williams as well. My apologies.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you and welcome.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacKinley: I'd just like to welcome all of the Liberals in the riding in the gallery tonight. I'm not going to get into names, most of them have been named. But I'm also glad with all the phone calls you give me and find out when I'm going to be on. Apparently I'm supposed to be on tonight and it's good to see you all here.

Speaker: Thank you.

Ms. Bertram: Madam Speaker?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to rise and welcome everyone to the public gallery tonight. I certainly would like to extend a warm welcome to the hon. Member from Kellys Cross-Cumberland's district especially, and many of those people that are in the gallery today were from my former district of Crapaud-Hazel Grove, so it's wonderful to have you here tonight as part of the proceedings. Good to see you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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. Premier, that the 23rd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 23, *Provincial Anthem Act*, Bill No. 42, ordered for second reading.

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

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Provincial Anthem Act*, Bill No. 42, read a second time.

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

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

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll ask the hon. Member from Kellys Cross-Cumberland to please chair the Committee of the Whole.

Chair (Docherty): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Provincial Anthem Act*.

Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Premier, please give us an explanation of what you're doing here and why you're doing it. I think everybody knows but that's -

Premier Ghiz: In the fall of 2007, members of the Acadian and Francophone community asked that, as part of the 250th anniversary for the deportation of Island Acadians, French lyrics be developed for "The Island Hymn." At that time, it was also mentioned that "The Island Hymn" should be turned into the provincial anthem.

Basically, today, I think most people recognize it as the provincial anthem. Probably one of your former constituents - everyone knows her as Kerri Wynne MacLeod - she does an incredible job of singing it at the beginning of Old Home Week. I think you were probably a member of Rotary at some point, I'm guessing. I think Rotary sings it at the beginning of their meetings as well.

So we thought we would, and of course it was written by L.M. Montgomery, and we thought it would be a good idea to make it the official Island hymn.

Mr. M. Currie: Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: Just one question. Have you had any concerns about it being gender-friendly for an Island hymn? Because -

Premier Ghiz: Good question.

Mr. Bagnall: - we've had a couple or some calls to the office with that period. So what's your feeling on that?

Premier Ghiz: Good question. I've had a couple of people contact me on that as well.

Obviously there is a historical content associated with this hymn. I think if it was rewritten today, perhaps the lyrics could be

a little different but we're also recognizing our history. I think, if you remember, recently in the Speech From the Throne by the federal government, it was mentioned that they were perhaps changing the lyrics to *Oh Canada* based on that as well. We saw what the public outcry there is.

I think that, while it is a valid point, it's still important to recognize the historical significance of the song and the fact that it was L.M. Montgomery that wrote the song.

Mr. Bagnall: I have no problem with that but I just think that it's something that maybe we should be really looking at. It means it's going to be our Island hymn, or our anthem. Before it was an Island hymn, but now it's going into the anthem for the province and it's the gender thing that I would have any concern with at all. But if you're prepared to adjust that -

Premier Ghiz: Yeah, you know, I'm prepared to consider it in the future but as of right now, no. I can inform you that back a couple of years ago the Women's Institute of Prince Edward Island had actually requested that "The Island Hymn" be recognized by the province, and that was the Women's Institute, so I think they recognize the historical significance of it.

Mr. Bagnall: Carried.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall Schedule 1 carry? Carried.

Shall Schedule 2 carry? Carried.

Premier Ghiz: I move the title.

Chair: *Provincial Anthem Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier Ghiz: I move the preamble.

Chair: Whereas *The Island Hymn*, the patriotic song of Prince Edward Island, with lyrics by Lucy Maud Montgomery and music composed by Lawrence W. Watson, was first performed in public on May 22nd, 1908;

And whereas after that initial performance the Island Hymn quickly became, and remains to this day, the much-loved hymn of Prince Edward Island;

And whereas the Island Hymn is an important part of the rich social and cultural fabric and daily life of the Island, and the singing of this stirring song has become a valued tradition at schools and churches and at the meetings of clubs, and other institutions across the province;

And whereas the Acadian and Francophone communities on Prince Edward Island have a vibrant and integral role in the Island's history and culture;

And whereas members of the Acadian and Francophone communities in 2007 requested the development and adoption of French lyrics for the Island Hymn as part of the 250th anniversary of the deportation of Island Acadians'

And whereas French language lyrics for the Island Hymn known as L'hymne de l'Île and written by Raymond J. Arsenault, were agreed upon by the Acadian and Francophone communities and the provincial government in March 2009;

Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier Ghiz: I move the enacting clause.

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

follows:

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that the 26th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 26, *An Act to Amend the Lotteries Commission Act*, Bill No. 48, ordered for second reading.

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

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Lotteries*

Commission Act, Bill No. 48, read a second time.

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

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I would ask that the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale chair the Committee of the Whole House for bills.

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

Mr. Bagnall: I don't think so. But I'd like the minister just to give us an explanation of what you're doing here.

Mr. Sheridan: Certainly will.

Atlantic Lottery, as you are well aware, has seen declining incomes now from traditional lotteries such as the ticket sales and VLTs and are now looking to change their formatting and look for other opportunities in the lottery gaming here.

So they are looking at branching out and doing a few things internationally, looking at opportunities that might be out there with regard to lotteries schemes in other countries, looking at opportunities out there to lend their consulting services. They are probably the first or second place lottery corporation in the world, with regard to their

expertise and their number of areas. They're looking to see to the fact whether they can go out and help other constituencies do the same types of things that they do so well here in Atlantic Canada.

So with that, we need to change a number of the wording, and as you see here in the bill, it stipulates what we can do inside of this, small word changes to allow them to go forward. All four provinces are looking at this legislation now and all four have their legislation drawn up. We'll be the first to put it through the House to allow them to move forward and look at other (Indistinct) in which to supply the companies.

Mr. Bagnall: Couple questions. Will this allow them to have online gambling?

Mr. Sheridan: The online portions they already have. They do it in the form of place here. Right now they have a number of games that are on that platform now. As you've heard in the news a number of months ago, BC lottery and Quebec lottery have moved to have a partnership with Atlantic Lottery to allow them to go on and have this platform evolve and do different things on that platform.

Mr. Bagnall: Do you have no concern, minister, that this may cause more addictions if they can gamble online from their house and we allow them more leeway to do Internet gambling, gambling online?

Mr. Sheridan: We are looking at that, of course. That was our first concern. What we have looked at is that there are a number of companies that are out there now offering the same product to our Islanders and to everyone across the world on the platform.

We want to make sure that we regulate our game with Atlantic Lottery so it will be the toughest and most regulated game out there in the marketplace.

Mr. Bagnall: So have you got some research, minister, into the addictions part of it?

Mr. Sheridan: All kinds of research has been done.

Mr. Bagnall: Would you table some of it?

Mr. Sheridan: Yeah, I can bring back everything that we have on it for you.

Mr. Bagnall: To me, we're making it easier for online video gambling. Addictions, right now it's tough with people. Money's scarce - economy time. I wonder - I'm not going to guess what you're doing here. I'm just wondering if we're not opening the door to more addictions through online gambling.

I know you can get on the line and get on any casino in the country by putting in your

Mr. Sheridan: Exactly.

Mr. Bagnall: But does that mean that we have to do it here in PEI?

Mr. Sheridan: It is here on PEI now, as you well know. It is there on the Internet and we want to be able to regulate that and ensure that (Indistinct) Atlantic Lottery goes on to play these games. We're not stating emphatically that they will be playing these same sorts of games.

What this does is allows us to move forward with a further extension of that platform that they now have and exists. Right now they play bingo and their ticket sales are there, and a few other games that they have. We're looking at different games of chance and skill that they will be able to put forward. It all has to come through our lotteries commission, all cleared through the minister and through Executive Council before any of these things are allowed. That would be

all stated out very clearly in the regs.

Mr. Bagnall: This will allow them to bring in the electronic poker games in their facility here?

Mr. Sheridan: Their electronic poker games were already covered under the other legislation -

Mr. Bagnall: But they haven't got them here?

Mr. Sheridan: Had them. Weren't successful in this jurisdiction. They have been very successful in Moncton market. Didn't work here well. They were covered under the old regs and legislation. This is to look at all other aspects that are out there to allow them to move forth.

Most of what we're aiming at now, hon. member, is that there are a number of jurisdictions in the world that are looking for this expertise. Atlantic Lottery offers that, and it's going to be a way for us to maintain the profits that the provinces do enjoy now from Atlantic Lottery.

So we're looking at a way to move forward to allow them to do this. As I say, the other three provinces all have the same legislation. All of our stuff - the questions that you ask about with regard to addiction, in our gaming strategy that we brought out two years ago in the fall, we have committed further dollars on that to allow -

Mr. Bagnall: This was over and above that, though. You weren't talking this at that time.

Mr. Sheridan: No, it was not. With what we have done we have committed a percentage of profits from it to allow further research, allow further treatment, allow all kinds of services out there to anyone that may be playing this game.

But as I say, the Island people now are playing online and we want to be able to regulate our players here in Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess I'm getting back to the video gambling. They've never had it here, but they do have it in Halifax and they do have it in Moncton. Like, for instance, blackjack and the Texas Hold 'em. They do have video games where you can sit around the table without a dealer and have that. This will allow them to be able to do that.

Mr. Sheridan: No, we've had that under our previous legislation. We had them here.

Mr. Bagnall: No, we've never had them here but we've had legislation that would allow them to be here. But they were never here.

Mr. Sheridan: Yeah, we tried them and it didn't work well. They were here for -

Mr. Bagnall: Couldn't have been very long - a couple days -

Mr. Sheridan: No, it was probably here for five to six months. Didn't work for a variety of reasons. You need to have a group all come in to sit around the table at once. It's not something that you can gather five people just out of the blue to take on the game. So it just didn't work well. So we shipped them back out and went back to Atlantic Lottery.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, how much more money did you put into the additions part?

Mr. Sheridan: We put forward \$300,000 into treatment.

Mr. Bagnall: How is that 300,000 going to be dispersed?

Mr. Sheridan: There's a number of

different services. One is a 24-hour help line that we have put in place. The treatment and access point is right at the Red Shores locations. There are people there to be available to talk to. All of the information is all there. We have purchased this machine that you can go and look into the inside of these machines, see how they work, see how often these numbers come up, see what your chances of winning are. And -

Mr. Bagnall: Where is that?

Mr. Sheridan: That's down at the Red Shores at the Charlottetown Driving Park.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, but where there?

Mr. Sheridan: There's a little room right off the side of it. They've just done some alterations down there now so -

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Mr. Sheridan: - it used to be when you walk in the front of the gaming floor, it would be over to your right and tucked in the little room right there. It's a little room to sit, read. All the paraphernalia is there that you'd want to read with regard to addictions and problems. There's a machine right there that would show you the insides and how often those numbers would come up. There's also a machine there that will dictate as to how much money you put in on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis and what that would mean to you with regard to savings or loss. And -

Mr. Bagnall: But that's only if you use your card.

Mr. Sheridan: No, that's for you to go in and just to use that as a tool when you think that you need a cooling off time or that you want to (Indistinct) -

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, but they would have no

record of you unless you use a card.

Mr. Sheridan: If you go in there and use that machine, you mean?

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah. They don't have a record of what you're spending or gambling unless you have a player's card.

Mr. Sheridan: Oh. No question about that. None of those are mandatory whatsoever, any of those services that they're offering. The only mandatory piece that they have is when they are self-excluded, which means that they've decided they don't want to come back. They then leave their picture ID with the people at the door and ask them to stop -

Mr. Bagnall: So, one more question. Are you comfortable that this is not going to add to the addictions in this province?

Mr. Sheridan: We have all of the research done. We have put all of the pieces in place that we can help those that are having struggles with it. We're talking about 1% of the population that does this. Most of the people that are playing these games do so in a manner that is very responsible and for enjoyment's sake.

When we talk about it, and this is world-wide research, we're talking 1% of the population that does struggle with it. We have put these kinds of things in place that are going to enable those to get help when they need it.

Mr. Bagnall: You will table those studies for me?

Mr. Sheridan: We sure will.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. Carried. Thank you.

Chair: Shall the bill carry in its entirety?

Carried.

Mr. Sheridan: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Lotteries Commission Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Sheridan: I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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 Environment, Energy and Forestry, that the 2nd order of the day be now read.

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.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'd ask the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford to chair the Committee of the Whole House for supply.

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

The section on Direct Building Maintenance has been read but has not been carried.

Are there any questions on that?

Mr. MacKinley: Can you give me a -

Chair: That's page 148 at the top, the very top section.

Mr. MacKinley: Can I have my deputy on the floor here?

Chair: Agreed to take the deputy on?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

An Hon. Member: Definitely.

Chair: Okay.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: Just want to be on -

Chair: Yes. That's carried. Up above that there's one section, Direct Building Maintenance -

Mr. MacKinley: I think we're on to Foster Millar, wasn't it?

Chair: - was read but was not carried.

Mr. MacKinley: I think we're on to Foster Millar.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: Okay. Okay.

Mr. MacKinley: What information were you looking to be brought back?

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

Mr. M. Currie: (Indistinct) something on Grand Tracadie and a few other things, wasn't there?

Mr. MacKinley: I brought that all back.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) made a list of them. You should have them.

Mr. MacKinley: I don't have a list.

Mr. M. Currie: Deputy?

Mr. MacKinley: You must know what you wanted.

Mr. M. Currie: Do you remember what?

Mr. MacKinley: Do you mean to say you lost your list what you wanted?

Mr. Bagnall: I'll go back and get it if I have to.

Mr. MacKinley: Well, go get it.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll not carry the section tonight, we'll just -

Mr. M. Currie: You were going to bring back what -

Mr. MacKinley: No, you don't have (Indistinct) for you.

Mr. M. Currie: - Foster was looking at for design for Grand Tracadie.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: Here, he's got it here.

Chair: Just a second. Okay? We have that information, deputy?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: If the hon. member could repeat the question.

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

Mr. M. Currie: We had asked, and you were going to talk to Foster, the redesign of the Grand Tracadie school to facilitate a youth facility and the costs associated with it.

Mr. MacKinley: Oh, yes.

Mr. M. Currie: Did you bring that back?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Tracadie Cross is the school that's being used by government.

Mr. M. Currie: Yes.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I don't recall the hon. member asking for anything to be brought back to the House about that project.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) didn't carry it.

Mr. MacKinley: No. That project would fall under the minister of health and social services, or minister of community services. They would request us to do something with it.

Mr. M. Currie: And they did.

Mr. MacKinley: And they did.

Mr. M. Currie: You already announced the youth facility, and what we asked for was what the - (Indistinct) is going to look like and how much it costs.

Mr. MacKinley: All we know right now is it's a youth facility. We announced it, but the minister's responsible, and I don't think there's any (Indistinct) there yet for what they want done.

Mr. M. Currie: Do you know how much it's going to cost to do this? Why would you announce something and not know what it's going to cost?

Mr. MacKinley: It would have to come from the Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour. You can ask her when she comes on.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Hon. member, if I could add to what the minister said.

When we were discussing it the last time, we're trying to make that point clear. The initiative, the facility, is being held by government for use by that department of community services for a youth at risk program. That's a program that they will be managing and a project that they will be managing. I made reference to Foster being involved in a consultative way, but I don't believe there's any specific start or commencement to the project that our

department's been involved in.

Mr. MacKinley: They might even decide to go out on their own and hire their consultant to do it.

Chair: Any other questions on that section?

Mr. M. Currie: Yes.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Did you guys table a list of all the leases that the government has at the present time?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I think so. It should be in your package in the red binder.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Okay. Total Public Works and Planning: 20,476,800.

Shall it carry? Carried.

The next section, Capital Project Division, apparently has been read and carried, so we're on to the top of page 149.

Capital Projects Administration.
 "Appropriations provided for the office of the Chief Engineer for administration and supervisory staff of the highway capital projects." Administration: 100,200.
 Equipment: 40,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 88,900. Professional and Contract Services: 73,300. Salaries: 2,416,100. Travel and Training: 91,700. Total Capital Projects Administration: 2,810,400.

Are there questions on this section?

Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: No.

Chair: Carried.

Design. "Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, equipment and travel for design." Administration: 6,700. Equipment: 1,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 4,200. Professional and Contract Services: 22,200. Salaries: 415,700. Travel and Training: 10,400. Total Design: 460,700.

Questions on this section?

Mr. M. Currie: Who's looking after the section?

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

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Darrell Evans is the manager of the section.

Mr. M. Currie: So who came up with the idea for all these roundabouts? Is that the minister?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: No, actually that was -

Mr. M. Currie: You're doing a story (Indistinct) *Compass* every night with her.

Mr. MacKinley: The roundabouts started when you guys were in power, and (Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: We're not in power any more. You are.

Mr. MacKinley: No, I know, and we're just going to make them better. Yours was a little narrow, or there's something with it, just a little narrow. We're going to make it

better. Paul Godfrey, I think, was the engineer that I even saw working on them. Then it would have to go through the staff and our chief engineer, Steven Yeo, and that.

Mr. M. Currie: So how many have you got on the drawing -

Mr. MacKinley: We told you that before, but we have got two for Riverside Drive -

Mr. M. Currie: Two for Riverside Drive.

Mr. MacKinley: One for O'Leary.

Mr. M. Currie: One for O'Leary? Oh.

Mr. MacKinley: O'Leary corner. We're fixing it.

Mr. M. Currie: One in Montague.

Mr. MacKinley: We're not quite sure of the Montague one yet. We're -

An Hon. Member: What are we doing there this year?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: We're going to meet with the town.

Mr. MacKinley: We're going to meet with the town, find out what the - depends how the estimates go tonight.

Mr. M. Currie: You should meet with the MLA in the area.

Mr. MacKinley: He never seems to be around. I'm mostly meeting with the councillors down there.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: But he'll take all the credit once you do it. (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: I have a good relationship with that council down there. I get along good with them. (Indistinct) pretty good relationship with Pat McGowan.

Chair: Further questions on this section?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'm going to give a point of privilege to the Government House Leader for recognition of guests.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I rise to invite and welcome a very special lady here from Ottawa. Her name is Sara Thorenton and she works for Wayne Easter's office. She's here for the weekend. Welcome.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: Bridge Maintenance.
"Appropriations provided for staffing, materials, travel and services to maintain small bridges." Administration: 4,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 915,100. Professional and Contract Services: 731,000. Salaries: 450,400. Travel and Training: 10,000. Total Bridge Maintenance: 2,111,000.

Any questions on that section?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

An Hon. Member: No.

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

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: Go ahead.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: The question's over here.

Chair: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: How many bridges are you going to work on this year, do you know?

Mr. MacKinley: How many bridges?

Mr. M. Currie: Yes. Major projects.

Mr. MacKinley: We are going to be working on - we have the bridge crews that have to be out there. We put that out for tender this year. They go in and fix up the smaller bridges and that that you have trouble with.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Mr. MacKinley: Large bridges, I'll have to go to my deputy.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There'll be four: West River, Darnley, Kildare and Cardigan.

An Hon. Member: Priest Pond.

Mr. MacKinley: Cardigan, I think, might be in your riding.

Mr. M. Currie: Priest Pond's another one. How many bridge crews do you have now on PEI?

Mr. MacKinley: Bridge crews? Six.

Mr. M. Currie: So there were six tenders for certain geographic areas?

Mr. MacKinley: There were four tenders and two crews came on before and they have a four-year contract, same as you guys did. So their's will be coming up -

Mr. M. Currie: Were they tendered?

Mr. MacKinley: They weren't tendered, no. We just (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Oh, so this is what you're doing now.

Mr. MacKinley: What we did was, it was a million dollar tender went out, and we got it done for 728,000, and we're going to be able to do more bridge work. We did it cheaper.

But you can't expect, we followed your suggestion. You gave the bridge crews four years - no tenders or anything - and I'm getting that same work done for 278,000 less -

Mr. M. Currie: When we came in there -

Mr. MacKinley: - plus we have - no, I'm just telling you now -

Mr. M. Currie: Now, I'll just telling you -

Mr. MacKinley: - exactly what's taking place - and out of those tenders, the one - the Gaudet's up west got back on.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. MacKinley: The one in Summerside lost - MacAusland - and I think that was something - that was won by Island Estimators for \$500 or \$ 600 lower than the rest.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. MacKinley: And then here is Wellner's, which was there before, and down east, we've got MacEwen who had problems with his equipment. He didn't have the right equipment, but we gave him a chance to up his backhoes and that. He only had a 63 horsepower backhoe, and it takes 80 horsepower in the tender specs. But he's

got the - I signed a contract with him the other day because he bought a new backhoe or got a better one.

Chair: Further questions on that section?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: In materials, supplies and services, you're going to spend another 113,000. What's that for?

Mr. MacKinley: Where is that at? Materials. We're fixing so many bridges we need more material. That's actually what it is - materials, supplies, and services - and we're doing a better service.

Mr. Brown: We're not like you guys who (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: According to your budget that might be another slush fund of 113,000. Is it?

An Hon. Member: Slippage.

Mr. Bagnall: That's slippage?

Mr. MacKinley: Normally if you -

Mr. Bagnall: I noticed you - but, minister -

Mr. MacKinley: What we're doing this year -

Mr. Bagnall: What I'm trying to find out is - here also, when you go to professional services, you're spending \$113,000 less. So why do you not budget properly instead of just throwing the figures in there so they'd come out right?

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. MacKinley: The professionals -

Mr. Bagnall: I mean, you're not showing any financial restraint here.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, but that's - just a minute.

Mr. Bagnall: It seems like your budgets are never on to what your estimates are and you never -

Chair: The minister's going to answer.

Mr. MacKinley: Listen. We got six bridge crews and we're going to do it for 731,000. It used to be a million under you fellows. So we're doing it for 731,000. How we're doing it, each bridge crew is going to have - I shouldn't say this with all these Liberals up there - it's going to have a checker. Before, they just sort of - our engineers had to look after the time and the people in charge. Now, every bridge crew is going to have a checker and weigher, and it's going to be just done like a construction project because we've got better accountability.

Mr. Bagnall: So are those people all coming from Cornwall?

Mr. MacKinley: I wish they were, but I couldn't find anybody to work there. They're all working. At least I'm honest about it. We went to -

Mr. Bagnall: I guess I'll go back to -

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, we went to the - yeah, we were - the bypass there. We were looking for a scale house to be built. I'm talking about a scale house. We were looking for a scale house. I went to 30 construction, I went to MacPhail's construction, I went to Watson's construction, and maybe another construction company -

Mr. Bagnall: This has nothing to do with the question I've asked.

Mr. MacKinley: - that builds bridges and houses. I thought the time we got a tender out to some people in my riding - guess what? They're all too busy in March. They're all working. So we had to go - I believe there's somebody from up Crapaud way, a MacDonald fellow - can't think of the name - and a couple of the Charlottetown tenders. That's how much work is going on. They didn't even have time to put a tender in. The project was worth about 70,000.

Chair: Further questions?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. Perhaps the deputy minister can answer the 113,000 both ways being out, because I know the minister can't.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes, hon. member, the materials, supplies and services. In relation to the standing offer contracts, the manager would charge the materials - shale, gravel, bridge stock - that might be supplied by the contractor, and the equipment, to this account. The labour component he would charge to the professional services account.

It varies a little bit because of the nature of the work. This is a general allocation, and those small standing offer contracts - they might go out and start a job and they don't know exactly what the proportion of labour versus materials versus equipment is going to be. The final solution -

Mr. Bagnall: Is it just a coincidence that it goes to 113,000, one over and the other under?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: So he manages both together for all intents and

purposes. But he has to charge it according to the procedure. But as you'll see, he's right on budget if you look at both of them combined.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: And that's just good management on his part.

Chair: Do you have another question? I'm going to go to the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Deputy, are the six bridge crews paid out of this section?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: The 700-some thousand?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The materials and equipment will be paid out of the materials, supplies and services portion.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: If you look at the printout you'll see Central Prince Contracting, you'll see Kings Country Construction, MacAusland, MacEwen, (Indistinct) -

Mr. MacKinley: We'll give you a printout of them.

Mr. M. Currie: And how much is that total there?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: And then under professional services you'll see them as well. Materials and equipment in the first, the labour component of the contract in the second.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay. Carried.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Materials Testing Lab. "Appropriations provided for salaries and related support costs for the materials testing lab and quality assurance for maintenance and construction operations." Administration: 19,800. Equipment: 10,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 12,800. Professional and Contract Services: 2,500. Salaries: 1,314,000. Travel and Training: 41,200. Total Materials Testing Lab: 1,401,000.

Any questions on that section?

An Hon. Member: Carried.

Mr. M. Currie: Question.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, I asked that question about a week ago or more on the test results for the bypass highway that was paved last fall.

It's my understanding that there are serious problems with the road and -

Mr. MacKinley: We were -

Mr. M. Currie: - you didn't answer me and you were going to bring the information back and you never gave it back.

Mr. MacKinley: I had the information. You just - you never asked for it.

Mr. M. Currie: Anyways. I did ask for it.

Mr. MacKinley: We've got the information here.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Mr. MacKinley: Basically, we were testing all the roads, as I said before -

Mr. M. Currie: We're only talking about

the bypass.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, I know. So I'll let the deputy answer that one.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The bypass project, as you know, probably commenced last year and it's finished this year. It was taken to the base asphalt level last year - the base is what has served over the winter and the rest of the contract would involve placing the seal coat.

Our lab has been looking at the work. They've taken some cores. They're looking at what they think might be some extra weathering that wouldn't be normal. You know any base asphalt that's left open is going to weather a little bit more than if you had sealed it. It's a coarser mix and that's just general - a condition that you'll get over winter. This looks like it might be more than what we'd normally expect.

The contractor has hired his own independent materials testing expert. The department has as well hired an independent expert. They are really just looking at it now, at this point, but we've not reached any decision or any conclusion that there is any faulty work. At this point, it's really just a case of taking some time to look at the material and look at the cores and do some testing and decide if there is a problem or not. It would be premature to think that we have anything that's going to constitute a serious contractual matter. It very well may stay just exactly as is, and we'll tack it and put the seal coat on it, or there could be something more serious than that, but we'll need to wait until the experts can complete their work.

Mr. M. Currie: I see them patching, and I see where there are spots marked to be cut out. Usually that means there's separation. It

wasn't the right mixture or it wasn't compacted enough. Was this done at Remembrance Day? Was that the weekend you did the heavy paving?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There was a lot of paving done very late in the year.

Mr. M. Currie: It was late in the year. So what I had asked the minister for was a copy of the test results and how many. So how many core samples were taken, and how many out of them did not pass?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Are you talking about the core samples that would have been taken during construction? Back in November?

Mr. M. Currie: Before and after.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yeah. I was speaking more about recent core samples that we've taken to deal with what looks to be this extra weathering potential that we've observed this spring after the roads have been in service. There would be daily cores taken for every day's production during the contract administration period.

Mr. M. Currie: Is that when you picked up that there was a problem?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No, no. The concern that you must be hearing about relates to just what we're looking at right now.

Mr. M. Currie: I have eyes. I drove out, I could see.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yeah. But every road job that we do would have lots of cores. You'd see paint marks where the lab would be out doing their thing. But, in this particular case, the cores that I was speaking about would be cores that we've

taken just in the last several weeks. As I said, independent materials testing firms, from both the contractors side and the department's side, will be reviewing them.

Mr. M. Currie: The department is saying what? You're not happy with the cores you've taken?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No, I don't think there's any particular physical test. What the department's concern has to do with is just the surface looks to be coarse and it looks like some of the liquid asphalt might not be as heavy on the surface as it should be because of extra wear.

Now we expect a little bit of that every time you leave base open for the winter, but it looks like this might be a little bit more than normal so we don't really have a specific -

Mr. M. Currie: So you're not going to sign off on it?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Not just yet, no.

Mr. MacKinley: We got a year's warranty on it.

Mr. M. Currie: What would be the case - you could make and tear it up and lay down new base?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That's a possibility. The other possibility is that we just accept - we'll conclude that there's nothing seriously wrong and that we would -

Mr. M. Currie: If you're bringing in an expert there must be (Indistinct).

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: We've got questions. Questions have to be answered.

Mr. MacKinley: We got questions, and

we've got a year's warranty. See, these roads, the contractors stand behind them for a year. We don't want to do the same thing we've been doing up in the minister of health's riding where you guys paved up there and then we had to go and rip it all up. We couldn't get a warranty from the contractors because it was too late to catch the problem. We're trying to just catch it quicker if there's a problem.

All these major jobs, that's what? A \$5 million job or something over there.

Mr. M. Currie: Seven and half million.

Mr. MacKinley: Seven and a half million. We're going to make sure it's done right.

Mr. M. Currie: That's what I'm wondering, but you didn't want to give me any of the answers when I did ask the questions. You denied them.

Mr. MacKinley: No, I said -

Mr. M. Currie: Yes, you did.

Mr. MacKinley: - we're doing testing. I told you. You just didn't listen.

Mr. M. Currie: Falling apart.

Chair: Question from hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness.

Mr. Henderson: I have a similar circumstance in my riding near Portage there. It's not that - the pavement is fine, but it's got a bit of a wavy run to it there for about a quarter of a kilometre maybe just -

Mr. MacKinley: That's what we did last year, is it?

Mr. Henderson: Yeah and I was wondering if you are aware of that. I know I talked to the engineer -

Mr. MacKinley: Imagine it would be.

Mr. Henderson: - and he was going to take a look at it.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'm aware that there was a problem with smoothness and it was being dealt with. I don't know much of the details, though.

Mr. Henderson: I know they haven't done anything to it, but it's still wavy like that. I just wanted to keep an eye on it.

Mr. MacKinley: Couldn't do anything yet because they never paved it late. Even the bypass over here was paved and done before (Indistinct) December -

Mr. Henderson: This was paved right at the end of the season, too, and it seems like it maybe cooled down quicker.

Mr. MacKinley: There's no paving - we can't get paving till the 17th of May this year because I checked to see when we can start paving roads. All these people up here want their roads paved and we can't even get pavement to do it. We can start right now.

Mr. M. Currie: And you won't do anything for them.

Mr. MacKinley: The pavement plants aren't open.

Mr. Henderson: I just want the department just to be aware of it and maybe keep an eye on it before -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Our material testing lab and staff out there, they're vigilant when it comes to quality control.

Mr. Henderson: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Georgetown-

St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: That road that's up west that's all wavy, that wouldn't be that ground rubber you put underneath it, would it?

Mr. MacKinley: The what?

Mr. M. Currie: That ground up rubber tires?

Mr. MacKinley: No, that went on the Strang Road. That's where you guys gave a permit to put a cottage subdivision, about three kilometres, on a seasonal road that was in an environmentally sensitive area, and you got all these big houses nobody can get in and out of. What a mess.

Chair: Further discussion on that section?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: So you're using some of this ground rubber. I thought you told me the other day on this untendered sweetheart deal you gave to your Liberal buddy - I thought that was only going to be sold to New Brunswick and it wasn't going to be used here. Are you buying some of this ground up rubber for -

Mr. MacKinley: It gets one road, the Strang Road -

Mr. M. Currie: You give him a contract. Now you're buying material back from him.

Mr. MacKinley: Yes. Another thing is if you say this is a Liberal buddy, this is the same guy who you gave \$10 million contract, untendered, to, you never (Indistinct) \$10 million of work untendered when you were there. You fired the Ramseys and gave this guy \$250,000 of snow removal, untendered again, signed it over, and you have the gall to change it like

that. Come on now. Come on.

We're getting \$10 million of untendered (Indistinct). You fired Ramseys, put all those people out of business up west. Yes, you did. I was there the night you went up there. Then you turned around and gave it to a Liberal company so you say they're Liberal now. You know what? Maybe that's why you're out there. I thought you were going to look after your own. You never even looked after your own.

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

Mr. M. Currie: What you should be talking about is the rubber tires. We're talking about the (Indistinct) tires.

Mr. MacKinley: The rubber tire was (Indistinct) growth and I think we spent about \$30,000 buying tires.

Chair: Further discussion on this section?

Mr. MacKinley: It's \$5 (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Do you have a stockpile of ground rubber up at the Summerside depot?

Mr. MacKinley: No, I don't think so. There might be some.

Mr. M. Currie: Deputy?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Not that I know of, no.

Mr. M. Currie: There's not pile of ground up rubber at the Summerside maintenance building up there?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Not that I know of.

Mr. MacKinley: I'll tell you what happened. When we were doing the Strang

Road we had so much rubber - we put the rubber down. It was \$30,000 or something. I'll find that out for you. It's \$5 a ton for this rubber. There was a great big pile of what you call used covered asphalt. It was all bumps and this and that. I was driving around with the Government House Leader and there's this big pile (Indistinct) Strang Road.

So I said: You see that pile? I said: That's all yours in the Strang Road. Like, it wasn't crushed or milled. It was just asphalt, big chunks, everything else, and it was going to cost 40,000 to go in and to get a miller in to mill it.

Mike Barrigan is probably one of the better organizers we have as far as transportation goes. He makes a tremendous job up there. He said when I was talking to him: You know what I'd like to try that on the Strang Road? I said: That's fine with me. The member was after me to get this road in his district fixed up. So then Stephen Yeo, the head engineer, he wanted to try the tires. So they put the tires on Strang Road. But they ran out of tires. There wasn't enough tires because the gentleman's got some other markets. We didn't have - no, we had enough tires. We didn't have enough of this cheap gravel because it's a waste product. Like when you take it in, the broken gravel and that. So we got to wait until we get more of that to put the rest of the tires down and cover it with this material.

You should take a drive into Strang Road. You need a helicopter to get in it.

Chair: Further questions?

Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: You were supposed to bring me back information on radar guns on that

other section back -

Mr. MacKinley: The radar guns were 2,500, wasn't it?

Mr. Bagnall: You said you would bring me the information, the cost and the prices on them.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, 2,500, wasn't it? Radar guns?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I don't remember a question about radar guns.

Mr. Bagnall: I got the Hansard here where I asked it.

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, he did.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Might have been some time -

Mr. Bagnall: Mr. MacKinley made a promise that he would bring them back.

Mr. MacKinley: The answer's \$2,500 a radar gun and they were bought out a year before budget.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, so you're saying 2,500 tonight. You told me 1,800 the other day.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, but that was (Indistinct) signs.

Mr. M. Currie: They're all over the place.

Mr. Bagnall: I asked you to bring back the invoice with the contracts on it and you said you would.

Mr. MacKinley: On what?

Mr. Bagnall: Have you got them here tonight?

Mr. MacKinley: For what?

Mr. Bagnall: For the radar guns.

Mr. MacKinley: Twenty-five hundred.

Mr. Bagnall: You said you were going to bring back the contracts and the prices for them.

Mr. MacKinley: I'll give you the price.

Mr. Bagnall: Table it, then.

Mr. MacKinley: You want to buy one or something?

Mr. Bagnall: We know what your prices are and it changes every time you're asked a question, so could you table the information?

Mr. MacKinley: I'll tell you one thing. I put the radar guns in these cars to make them safe. If people -

Mr. Bagnall: No problem.

Mr. MacKinley: You guys never put any radar guns in anything -

Mr. Bagnall: We've never said anything about that. We just asked you the price.

Mr. MacKinley: If you got these people, highway scales people, highway safety, they must be looking at the trucks that are going too fast -

Mr. Bagnall: Do you have the price? Do you have the -

Chair: Just a sec. What exactly is the question, member?

Mr. Bagnall: He promised he was going to bring back the invoices and the contracts for these radar guns and he told me he'd bring them back.

Chair: Minister, do you have the price?

Mr. MacKinley: I told him, 2,500. Now listen, just wait -

Mr. Bagnall: He also told me 1,700. I asked -

Mr. MacKinley: Listen to this. The thing with these radar guns, they were bought a year before. I got them going right after we come in. What they do, they track and find large commercial trucks, not cars or half ton trucks - large commercial trucks. We have slowed down the commercial trucks on the highways because it's a very small area and soon (Indistinct) word got out that the radar guns are in the cars. We followed the same recommendations as the RCMP.

Now when you guys were there you just had them driving around. I gave them an extra job. It's not costing any more. If we want to stop cars we have got to give them arms. We got to be able to put them through a test and give them arms, and we're not going to do that.

Apparently, pulling over a car or truck is the most dangerous thing a police officer can do - not a commercial truck, but this is what they tell me. So in order for us to be able to pull over a car and that, or a truck, say - well, I know highway officers. They were down at Mount Stewart and there was somebody they noticed there and something strange and they chased them in the woods. You know, he went in through the woods, he goes off on them. He had a whole bunch of dope in the car, no license, and just got out of Dorchester. Here you got two unarmed highway safety officers. That's a dangerous situation. But the guy put his hands up and came out.

Chair: Does that give you the answer to the radar guns?

Mr. Bagnall: No, it didn't. The minister made a commitment and we carried this section because he promised that he would bring back that information and -

Mr. MacKinley: What (Indistinct) there now?

Mr. Bagnall: We took you at your word. You told us here that you were going to bring that information back.

Mr. MacKinley: What is it you want?

Mr. Bagnall: If you're not going to -

Chair: Just a second.

Mr. MacKinley: We can fix this.

Chair: We'll get clarification.

Mr. MacKinley: Clarification.

Chair: Exactly.

Mr. Bagnall: You were going to tell us how many. You were going to bring back the cost of those things and where they were purchased and the contract for them.

Mr. MacKinley: Is that in the transcripts? Did you ask for that?

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah. It's right here.

Mr. MacKinley: Send it over here and I'll look at it.

Mr. Bagnall: No, I'm not sending it over there. You should have it yourself.

Mr. MacKinley: Oh, no. You won't send it over. He's adding more to it every time. I can get the transcripts the same as you can.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, well -

Mr. MacKinley: You can't read from a document unless you table it from the House. You have to table that.

Mr. Bagnall: It's my information here.

Mr. MacKinley: No, you're tabling it.

Mr. Bagnall: You get the chance to look at it. We'll not carry any more sections tonight until we get the information.

Mr. MacKinley: What's your information -

Mr. Bagnall: Haven't got them all - we have nothing.

Mr. MacKinley: No, no. Listen to this. This just clears the problem. Every time I ask him what he wants he adds to it.

Mr. Bagnall: The problem is -

Mr. MacKinley: I tell you what I'll do - here's what I'll do -

Chair: Just wait. Just wait.

Mr. MacKinley: No, just wait. I'm going to settle this.

Chair: No.

Mr. MacKinley: I'll get you whatever I promised you in the transcripts and I'll deliver them to you. How's that? Is that good enough?

Chair: Is that all you want? Is that good enough for you?

Mr. Bagnall: I'm not carrying any sections till we get it.

Chair: Exactly -

Mr. MacKinley: I'll get you what I said in the transcripts I'd get for you. I'll get it for

you.

Chair: He just wants answers to they questions. Specific questions. We're going to get that straightened out.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, will you table that information?

Mr. MacKinley: You've got to know that I said I would in the transcript.

An Hon. Member: Read it to him.

Mr. MacKinley: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, will you table the cost of the radar guns?

Mr. MacKinley: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Chair: You'll table that?

Mr. Bagnall: You will table the cost?

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. And how many did you buy? You said you were going to table that too.

Mr. MacKinley: All right.

Mr. Bagnall: I think that was - and you said there was a contractor - and you said you would table that too.

Mr. MacKinley: What contractor is that?

Mr. Bagnall: I don't know. For those guns? Or was there -

Mr. MacKinley: No, no. We just went to the market and bought them wherever we could buy them cheapest.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Mr. MacKinley: I think we bought them through the RCMP. I'll find that out for you.

Mr. Bagnall: Anyway. So you'll table that?

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah. I'll find it out. I think we did maybe buy them through the RCMP.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. Bagnall: So when are we going to have that tabled? Because we're not going to carry your section until we get the information.

Mr. MacKinley: I'll have that for you tomorrow.

Chair: He can bring it back in tomorrow.

Mr. MacKinley: We'll have that for you tomorrow -

Chair: Okay.

Mr. MacKinley: - but the thing is with those radar guns, we had to send our highway safety people to be trained, I believe, at the police academy - was it? - or the RCMP.

Mr. Bagnall: That wasn't the question. The question was how much -

Mr. MacKinley: No, I know.

Mr. Bagnall: - (Indistinct) costing.

Mr. MacKinley: We'll get that for you.

Chair: We have a question from the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, on the test results for the failed road out here in the bypass,

will you bring those results back as I asked the other day too?

Mr. MacKinley: You'll have to check with the deputy. He's been following on that.

Chair: Hon. member.

Mr. M. Currie: You're the minister responsible for the department.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, well -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: To the best of my knowledge there are no failed test results and no - I forget the words used to describe it.

Mr. M. Currie: Why would you bring in an expert now? You're bringing an expert and both of you are at a loggerhead if he's bringing an expert in and your department is bringing an expert in to determine the results and evaluation of the test results. There's a serious problem when you do that.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The issue is serious, but there is no test result that I could bring to the House that shows a failure.

Mr. M. Currie: Why are you bringing in experts?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Just because of that. There is no specific test result. If it was really straightforward, there's a test results and they scored 95 instead of the 98, or whatever the benchmark was, that would be really simple. This is more of an observational concern. It looks to be worn. It looks to be weathered more. There's no specific specification that the department can stand behind, so we have concerns and we don't want to have the seal placed on it until we know why it is that way and whether or not it's a concern.

The easy thing for the department to do would be just to tell the contractor: You know what? We don't like it. Mill it off and put another layer down. That's not the fair thing to do. The contractor's position is that's just normal, that's just what base looks like after a winter. So -

Mr. M. Currie: So you're saying that all the compaction tests haven't been met.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No. I haven't checked the compaction tests.

Mr. M. Currie: Are you telling me that the liquid content for all the test results meets the department's test?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: What I'm saying is I don't think there's any particular test result from back in November of 2009, while the work was being done, that can be pointed to that relates to the concern that we have today. The concern we have today is just the general appearance, and you've said you drive the road regularly and you've seen it - it looks a little more worn than a normal base job does. More coarse -

Mr. MacKinley: If you're driving over that road

Mr. M. Currie: It doesn't look like it was compacted. That's why I'm asking.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yeah. I don't think it's anything to do with compaction. I think it's more to do with the stripping. Maybe the asphalt cement didn't bond as well, or is worn off more easily. Those are just questions that people have right now, the engineers have. The way to get those questions answered is bring together the best experts that we can. Of course, the contractor's not going to take our word for it alone. He's asked to have his -

Mr. M. Currie: So when do you figure -

Mr. MacKinley: If you drive on the highway -

Mr. M. Currie: - that they'll have the results of that?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It will probably take a good while.

Mr. M. Currie: So you definitely won't put a seal coat on until -

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Absolutely not.

Mr. MacKinley: No.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Mr. MacKinley: If you're driving on the highway, as you said, what you notice is some areas are right smooth. There's very little gravel showing. And in some more areas there's more gravel showing, and that's what we're concerned about, from what I understand.

Chair: A question from the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Mr. Murphy: I'm just wondering about the radar signs. Are they going to be moved around the province this year?

Mr. MacKinley: I don't know.

Mr. Murphy: Like the places where there might be a problem with speed.

Mr. MacKinley: We're looking at them. We're getting the information up there, and we're interested in buying more. I don't know if we've got any more ordered or not, have we?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I don't

think we're ordering any more. We've got a pretty good supply.

Mr. MacKinley: We've got enough of them?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: But yes, to answer the question -

Mr. Murphy: But what I'm asking, I guess, is it possible to have one moved up the Bloomfield area?

Mr. MacKinley: Bloomfield?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yeah. To answer the question, communities have contacted us and have highlighted an area where they think there's a localized speed problem. We have been responding to those kinds of requests, and we will continue to.

Mr. Murphy: Okay. Thanks.

Mr. MacKinley: If we want to fix the speed, we just put photo radar in those signs and we'd have it all, but nobody wants to do that.

Chair: Further questions in that section?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Chair: Question.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Back to the radar guns, just a second, the question I asked you - what was the contract for the radar guns and how much? You asked me: For the radar guns? And I said: Yes. And you said: They were \$1,800 a piece.

Mr. MacKinley: No, they're 25.

Mr. Bagnall: And then you went down below and you said they were 2,500. So,

obviously there was a contract, so will you table that contract?

Mr. MacKinley: If we can find a contract, then we'd have to probably sign a purchase order or something. Yeah, I'll get whatever I got. They were \$2,500. I checked - after you asked me that question - I think I checked, and I think they said 2,500. They were going to look it up and I said don't bother, I think that was it.

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

Mr. MacKinley: Eighteen hundred. I can find it. I can probably find that out if I went and phoned John MacDonald or Doug MacEwen right now.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Chair: Is it covered? Okay.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Capital Project Division: 10,252,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Moving to page 150.

Infrastructure.

Infrastructure. "Appropriations provided for the delivery of various Canada-Prince Edward Island Infrastructure Programs."
Administration: 57,000. Equipment: 2,900. Materials, Supplies and Services: 19,000. Professional and Contract Services: 60,000. Salaries: 308,800. Travel and Training: 11,600. Grants: 35,594,100. Total Infrastructure: 36,053,400.

Any questions on that section?

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, the PEI-Canada infrastructure - the figures you gave us total

up to \$11 million, and yet the figure you've got in your book is \$35,594,000.

Mr. MacKinley: Well -

Mr. Bagnall: There's 20 million bucks there. Where?

Mr. MacKinley: The grants on the book here are federal and provincial share, I know that.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: What? MRIF money?

Chair: The Minister of Health and Wellness.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Hon. member, could you clarify the \$11 million that you're referring to?

Mr. Bagnall: It's \$11,269,760. It's under Canada-PEI municipal rural infrastructure program. You gave me a breakdown of ever expenditure.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: That would be one program

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There would be - in the next fiscal year, there would be the municipal rural infrastructure program - MRIF - there would be gas tax, the original gas tax agreement, there's a gas tax extension.

Mr. Bagnall: Where is that in here?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: There's a Build Canada fund - communities component of Build Canada fund - major projects component, and an infrastructure stimulus program. So you have six programs.

Mr. Bagnall: You didn't give us a breakdown of any of them then, deputy?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The 35,594,100 under the grants line, would be the 2010-2011 cash flow from all of those sources, for both the federal and the provincial portion. The recipient portion would not be - if it was - some of them are 50-50 just between federal and provincial entities. Some are one third, one third, one third.

Mr. Bagnall: So is that \$35 million in there, fed money included?

Chair: Just let him finish that (indistinct).

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Pardon me?

Mr. Bagnall: That 35 million in there, is that the fed money included?

Mr. MacKinley: Yes.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Why would it be included in your operating budget when it's money in, money out?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It's the total spend. There'd be a revenue number -

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: - that would reflect the federal revenue, which would be roughly half that.

Mr. Bagnall: So that there 11 million is really only 5 million provincial, or one-third provincial money? So it would only be three million?

Mr. MacKinley: It would be half that, wouldn't it?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: No, the municipal portion we don't report, because we don't actually spend the municipal portion.

Mr. Bagnall: So this is 50-50 here?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes. Well -

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It's complicated, let me tell you.

Mr. MacKinley: Well.

Mr. Bagnall: It wouldn't be 50-50, though, right?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It's -

Mr. MacKinley: Would it be 50-50?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: - very complicated work, trying to track all these programs and the eligibility and the potential ways that the cost-sharing can work. Some are one-third, one-third, one-third. Some are 50-50. Some are 50-25-25. So what you see is what the staff at the secretariat have prepared for the - showing the 2009-2010 cash flow from all the various programs as well as the 2010-2011 program. There may be 200 projects involved, but they're spread out over a multi-year period.

Mr. Bagnall: Why wouldn't all the projects be in here? Why would only one-third of the projects be listed here for us?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Because -

Mr. Bagnall: If the other projects had been approved, they're not here.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The projects that are listed are the projects that were completed.

Mr. Bagnall: So what programs are coming?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Gas tax, for instance. The -

Mr. Bagnall: No, the infrastructure ones.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The Build Canada?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes. (Indistinct) of those projects are here.

Mr. MacKinley: They get five years to finish that, or something.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, but they've been approved, what you're going to do, right?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: The Build Canada funds come 100% committed.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes. So how come we haven't any breakdown on that?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: We can bring you a breakdown if you want.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, I do.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: It gets to become a very large table that's very difficult to follow.

Mr. Bagnall: I understand, but I want to see that.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: We want a breakdown where it's all going.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Just so

I'm clear, you want the Build Canada funds breakdown -

Mr. Bagnall: Yes. And I want any infrastructure that you haven't got listed here in this thing of projects, because there are other projects that aren't listed here.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Okay. So if we brought back a list of projects which totalled, for the fiscal year 2010-2011, 35,594,100, would that satisfy the hon. member?

Mr. Bagnall: That 's what I'm asking for, yes.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Okay.

Chair: Further questions on that section?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, who looks after this section?

Mr. MacKinley: Darlene Rhodenizer.

Mr. M. Currie: Darlene?

Mr. MacKinley: I think so. Darlene Rhodenizer is the manager. Yes, it's Darlene.

An Hon. Member: Carried.

Chair: Carry the section? Carried.

Total Infrastructure: 36,053,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Question.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Deputy, you had made a promise you were going to bring back information on where you get all the sign materials.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: You brought that?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I have that.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: I'll ask you to go to the handout that we gave you and I can explain -

Mr. M. Currie: Where you buy all the (Indistinct) blanks and stuff?

Steve MacLean Deputy Minister: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay. If it's in there, we'll find it then.

Mr. MacKinley: What I've got here, before you go -

Mr. M. Currie: Seven Mile Road. Are you doing the Seven Mile Road?

An Hon. Member: Seven miles of it.

Mr. M. Currie: Seven miles of bad road, I'll tell you that. It's not good. Ask the minister over there from Souris.

Chair: The minister has a comment here.

Mr. Campbell: It was neglected down there for 11 years.

Mr. MacKinley: Anyway, what I've got here, you requested the total number of

tickets, highway safety commercial vehicle enforcement officers, from April 1st to March 31st. There were 312 tickets written, the total fines is \$54,294. I'll table that.

Mr. M. Currie: Yes. You gave me that.

Mr. MacKinley: Oh, I gave it? I should table it for the rest of them.

Chair: Total Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal: 121,730,900.

Shall it carry?

Mr. M. Currie: Before we carry that, minister, are you going to bring that information back?

Mr. MacKinley: Yes. I said could probably get it over the phone if I phoned John MacDonald, but anyway I'll take it back.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: I vaguely remember that we might have bought them through the police. I can't remember, though, for sure. That's two years ago.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: We finished with that department and we're moving now to estimates in agriculture, I believe.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: Starting on the top of page 24.

Do you want to bring the deputy in?

Mr. Webster: Yes.

Chair: Permission to bring the deputy on?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Chair: Granted.

Any questions before we start?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: You have your materials, supplies and services for all the sections for us? And contract services for us?

Mr. Webster: Yes. My deputy apparently has that information here ready to disseminate.

Chair: Okay. We'll circulate that.

Starting on the top - okay, we'll wait until we (Indistinct).

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Webster: Yes, Mr. Chairman?

Chair: Question from the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Twenty-five thousand.

Chair: Do you have a question before we get into the sections?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm waiting for the minister to get ready there. It's okay.

Mr. Webster: Go ahead.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, agriculture, I guess you'd say pretty well is kind of in a crisis right now. Have you got a five-year plan put in place for agriculture here in the province?

Mr. Webster: We've had a series of studies done and plans done, and from that we've

created some vision, I guess. We do agree that there's some challenges in agriculture right across North America and right across Canada as well, and obviously, we need to find profitability in agriculture.

The supply managed systems that we have do quite well, consistent, not huge profits, but they are - it is working. The challenge we have is the oversupply which results in low prices for potatoes, beef and pork. These challenges have been coming on the industry over the last decade, really, and that decline is there. We're trying to create a safety net system that's as good as we can make it through government. We're encouraging our growers to be as competitive as we can be. We're also trying to create a competitiveness in the tax system in those particular areas so there's a level playing field for our producers, and that's kind of our vision. We're moving in those directions.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. You mentioned three sectors there. What about the blueberry industry, for instance? I mean, that's in crisis right now as far as price is concerned, and cranberry. So what are we doing on those?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Webster: The blueberry industry up until this past year had been doing quite well. The prices were a dollar something.

Mr. Bagnall: They're on for 30 cents a pound now, I think.

Mr. Webster: Pardon?

Mr. Bagnall: I think they're being offered 30 cents a pound now.

Mr. Webster: Right now they are, it's low. Up until last year returns were very good. Blueberries were very high and pretty well

received. What I understand is there's competition coming now from highbush blueberries that can be grown a lot of different areas in North America, and that's putting the pressure on the wild blueberry production system.

Mr. Bagnall: What about cranberries?

Mr. Webster: Cranberries certainly, from the outset, didn't achieve the numbers that were expected and the returns that were expected. The assumption was made by the people of the day, the decision makers, that they could be in full production in three to four years. The truth is it's actually six years before you can get a full yield crop, if you like. So those people had endured significant amount of losses till they get their production in full production.

So it's coming, but the anticipation, the indication early on, was they were going to be in production quickly. But it didn't quite happen that way.

Mr. Bagnall: Did you write off cranberry loans?

Mr. Webster: We did a partial write-off and we did do some support for the cranberry people, yes.

Mr. Bagnall: How much did you write off?

Mr. Webster: The total amount, 800 to \$900,000 in total.

Mr. Bagnall: For how many growers?

Mr. Webster: All the growers that are out there.

Mr. Bagnall: So how many?

Mr. Webster: Twelve or so, 10 or so.

Mr. Bagnall: So you wrote off 800,000 on

cranberry loans for eight growers?

Mr. Webster: I think there is 10 or 12. I stand to be corrected on the number.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. Do you have a breakdown of that?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I can bring a breakdown back if you wish.

Mr. Bagnall: I wish.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: So minister, then, I'm not criticizing that, don't get wrong on that. Because when I was minister I think we had five proposals that went through to budget Cabinet trying to help the cranberry people at that time, also. So, it's not something that I'm criticizing, I just was wondering if it ever got done.

Mr. Webster: Yes it got done and they seem to be making better progress now. They need to get their yields up to where they need to be to get the returns they need. But the investment on cranberries is very heavy at the front end.

Mr. Bagnall: I had a couple of concerns when I was looking at them and there was a couple of cranberry growers that - I'll not mention names because I don't think it's proper to mention names on the floor here - but seemed like didn't put the effort into it and maybe didn't put the capital in that they received into what they were doing and were looking for write-offs after.

I think your deputy knows what I'm talking about and I'm not going to ask names, but were they included in these write-offs?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: As you're well aware, the situation was back and forth five or six times. It was very difficult to find

a fair, equitable way to deal with these growers. The solution that was come up with was fair across the board to all the growers concerned.

I guess as we go beyond the current situation, we're able to put BMPs in place this year funded by the federal government to help them sand.

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: We're able to put best management practices in this year to help the cranberry guys sand their bog.

The issue was lack of capital to improve the bogs and we were able to talk the federal government into adding a BMP (Indistinct) program where they can actually now help them sand. So we're actually helping them pay for the sanding which allows them to increase productivity. The issue has always been yield, not getting the yield up high enough. We're now making progress in that area. So we're able to find different sources of funding with federal help to actually help the productivity of the bogs. So we are making some progress. As you're well aware, this was a very tough file.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess I'm kind of concerned because this question I just asked you on the cranberry loans, I had called your department and asked for this information awhile ago. I was told by your department that: No, we didn't write off any cranberry loans and we didn't do anything with them. This was just before we went into the House.

Mr. Webster: I'm now aware of that. It could be in Hansard.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess the reason, I just think that - you get one story here - and I'm not criticizing anybody, but your staff better - if

they're going to give information out they better be correct.

Mr. Webster: Oh, absolutely.

Mr. Bagnall: I was given false information when I called because I was told there was no cranberry loans written off by our staff. Because I directed the questions to be asked. It came back from your department that there was no cranberry loans written off.

Mr. Webster: Maybe at that time there was none. When was the call?

Mr. Bagnall: Just before the opening of the House, so it was done -

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: In fairness, maybe the staff wasn't aware of that. I can't answer or defend that because I don't know. But the call never came into my office. You would have got the truth if you had called my office, or the right answer, I guess. I think you got the truth. They probably didn't know.

Mr. Bagnall: My research staff did the call for me. So I'll check out who they talked to.

I guess my next thing is the organic program. Has it stymied? You haven't put out all the money the last couple of years into the organic growth, right?

Mr. Webster: We have an organic program that we fund producers. It seems like the organic interest is slightly waning, for whatever reason. If you reflect back to ADL, they had organic cheese. They basically couldn't sell it and they dropped the production of it.

Mr. Bagnall: No, I understand that.

Mr. Webster: They had some issues. How strong is the organic movement? We are there to support the organic movement, but I

can't go out and give applications to people and say: You have to take applications. It's up to the interested parties to come forward with a proposal and at that point then they get judged on their proposal.

Mr. Bagnall: So you had \$1.5 million in the budget. What's the uptake on it now?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: For the organic programs?

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: It's in the notes here, you'll come across that.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll come to that?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yeah, we'll come to that in the notes.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. I guess another program is - I understand the uptake is not (Indistinct) is the ALUS program. I understand that we didn't use all the funds that were in the ALUS, which is a program that you've been promoting big time. How come we wouldn't have used all the funds?

Mr. Webster: The ALUS program started out a little bit on the slow side, I guess, and people were unsure of what it was and what the program entailed. But I can tell you, it's ramping up now significantly. It was in the department of environment for a year, I guess, or almost a year and we moved it over to agriculture and people now are more interested in it.

There was a proposal at Slemon Park put forward by a livestock and potato producer, and he got up and made a presentation that this ALUS program was a very good program and it acknowledges and rewards landowners. It's not only farmers, it's landowners, for ecological goods and services. That really ramped it up. People

are now recognizing that there could be 1,000 to \$4,000 a year for a particular farmer that is doing things and we're rewarding for that.

So, I'm totally confident that we will exceed our total allotment which is (Indistinct) dollars.

Mr. Bagnall: But you didn't last year.

Mr. Webster: No, but we will. I mean, you don't start out with these things just instantly full blown and go.

Mr. Bagnall: I understand that.

Mr. Webster: People have to buy into it.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, I understand that. But the thing is there - is this 100% federal funding on the ALUS program?

Mr. Webster: No.

Mr. Bagnall: What's the breakdown on that?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: It's 100% provincial funding, but we're allowed to count it as 40% share against federal funding. But it's all provincial dollars.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, but you're getting 40% rebate back, right?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: No. Well, we get to use it, I guess, as counted as 60-40 split.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, it's 60-40 split.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: It is all provincial dollars.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, so with the 60/40 split, is your money coming from agriculture or is your money coming from environment?

Mr. Webster: Agriculture.

Mr. Bagnall: Then what are you doing with the million dollars that the minister of environment told us that he switched over from his department to the ALUS program?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: That's funding ALUS.

Mr. Webster: When the project came to us the money came too, as far as I know. So he doesn't -

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: It's the same million dollars. All that happens is the responsibility of the program is switched from environment to agriculture. The money was the same -

Mr. Bagnall: Say that again.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: It's the same money, it was just switched from one department to the other. We were heavily involved in delivering the program. The money was moved from environment to agriculture.

Mr. Bagnall: But it was in agriculture before.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: No, we never had it.

Mr. Bagnall: Oh, you never had it?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Never had it.

Mr. Webster: The project was born in environment when I was in environment and the project ended up following me over to agriculture, and so did the resources.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: It was the wishes of the federation to have it moved to agriculture. They lobbied hard to have it

move from environment, so it was the wish of the current minister of the day to move it, so it's not under agriculture.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, you mentioned earlier that there was not a large take up on the organic side of your program. Can I suggest, maybe, that you consider that the department take a lead role in maybe joining with the group at Macphail property to do one organic plot of a certain species and enhance the group down there?

You talked last night very passionately about the fact - it's a pristine facility. It's a walk back in time, and maybe it's a good time for you to champion the cause down there, or your government, and do an organic section that would draw more people to the place. Maybe the sales of product that's not in competition with other farmers can be grown there and make use of the funding, and we'd certainly approve that.

Mr. Webster: That's a very good point. I am passionate about land -

Mr. M. Currie: They're looking for ideas.

Mr. Webster: - and how it's managed and so on.

Mr. M. Currie: It's pristine land. Probably no chemicals ever sprayed on it.

Mr. Webster: Yeah, yeah. No, that's a very interesting concept. I have not seen the new proposal yet that they've put forward, just because I haven't had time to digest it, but I'm sure it will be discussed within the ministers.

Mr. M. Currie: (Indistinct) you'll probably champion that now.

Mr. Webster: Well, yes. Absolutely.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you.

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

Mr. Henderson: Getting a little bit of feedback on the Future Farmer Program, how -

Chair: Can't hear.

Mr. Henderson: Some feedback on the Future Farmer Program, how are numbers doing on that? Did we do anything to enhance that program recently?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yeah, we had an initial flush, as you would imagine. We started the program with about 140. The numbers - we only get about 10 to 12 new ones per year. We have started what's known as more of an alumni club for those that have gone through the first phase, because it's important to keep - the important part of the program is the training component, so they recognize that, and having gone through the program they want more of that. So there's really - it's an ongoing continuing education. There's really no end of the program for training. We want to continue training them. But there are continuous ones.

As farmers decide what to do, in terms of their dairy operations, succession planning, they're still coming in, in small groups. It's a program that's supported by the federation. They talk about it across Canada as one of the best across Canada - future farmers - so, as a department, we're quite proud of it. We continue to enhance it, especially the training component of it.

Mr. Henderson: Have there been many drop out of it and just give up and say it's not possible - I'm hoping there would be a lot that would continue on.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: No. Initially we had a few. A lot of people jump into it, and we had some dropped, but the ones that commit now are pretty committed.

Mr. Henderson: Okay. Good.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah. Another thing I want to talk about a little bit is the insurance program. I know you expanded the coverage for potato farmers so they now get coverage, so instead of getting \$7 a hundred to \$9 a hundred - is that not correct?

Mr. Webster: That's correct.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah. So what have you done for the wheat producers? What's their increase that they're going to get coverage on?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I don't have totally all the numbers in front of me, but we did review last year pre-2009. We went through the season, and 2010 we reviewed it again. I know we do have a lime discount involved now which includes everyone. Which includes wheat and barley and -

Mr. Bagnall: You have those things with you, deputy?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I can give you copies of the new programs and discounts if you wish. They're just being signed, but I can bring copies.

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I can bring copies of the programs if you wish.

Mr. Webster: I believe I have those numbers.

Mr. Bagnall: Do you have copies there with you?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yes, I think I have copies of the programs here.

Mr. Bagnall: Could you table that for us, then?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I can table it for you. Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. A question on that. I'm getting some concern from wheat growers and calls that because they had a claim last year that their cost of insurance has gone sky high this year. Is that a legitimate complaint or is that fiction?

Mr. Webster: I have not received any complaints surrounding that. On average, I believe, our costs are almost identical to last year, but don't quote me on that. There may be slight increases, but we are trying to keep the cost of insurance low, so we can have full participation by producers.

We want everyone to buy into the concept of the safety net system, because some growers - producers of different sectors - will say that you're only one crop failure away from bankruptcy. So if you lose your crop for some reason, and your whole crop, it's going to be a very devastating thing, because margins are fairly tight. I want 100% compliance. I'll never get it, but I'm hoping to get - we were at 68% last year, from 62 the previous year. My goal is 80, 82% of total acreage of all sectors on PEI covered.

We're trying to address, with an affordable

program, insurance, whether it be hay, wheat, barley, other crops. Everything is almost covered. I believe we put something together for crambe, which is a new crop grown last year. We have a program there. We have a livestock entrapment program. I believe we have a coverage. We're the first province of Canada to have a program surrounding that.

Mr. Bagnall: What was that again?

Mr. Webster: For livestock?

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. Yes, I know.

Mr. Webster: Which would be an entrapment, or I believe, like a milk disease or something. So we're trying to cover people and give them protection they need on a broad range of products at an affordable price.

Mr. Bagnall: So, minister, if I'm getting you straight here, you're telling me that anybody that had claims last year in wheat and potatoes and everything, they're going to pay the same rate for their insurance this year? Is that what you're telling me?

Mr. Webster: I wouldn't say exactly the same, but if someone could have had a claim for two years, of three years even in a row - well, if you have two or three highway accidents, your insurance is going to go up. You cannot maintain the straight line. It is going to be affected, but I believe, on average, where there's very little change from last year to this year - going into this year.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess my concern is - because I'm hearing that there's a major increase. That if I had claims in the grain and wheat before, and to buy the insurance again this year, that there's a major rate increase for me to buy it. You're telling me there isn't.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Each individual farm is different, and (Indistinct) spent on their crop history. You can't make a blanket statement like that. If you had three or four crop failures in a row, yes, your premium's going to go up. But there's no way to generalize that. Some people - you have a 10-year history that's counted. So if you have a pristine history, where you have no claims, then your crop insurance rate - it's like that first - if you have one car accident every 20 years.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm sorry, Brian, I can't hear you.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: They take a 10-year history.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: So if you had no claims over the previous nine years you're not going to get very much of a bump. But if you've had claims, a lot of claims, over that 10 years, then yes, it's going to go up, like anything else. It's not a stabilization program, it's an insurance program. That's the problem with that, too.

Mr. Bagnall: Well -

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: There are no blanket statements as -

Mr. Bagnall: So the comment I'm hearing then, from the farmer, is that he had claimed last year, because of whatever - I forget now what it was - but he tells me to get his claim this year his rates have gone way up. He said: Last year was the first time I claimed on it. So you're telling me that's not true?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I'm telling you that each farm is different. You can't generalize that situation. There could be other circumstances. I have no idea what his track record is. It's based on an

individual farmer's records and history. So you can't say - there's no general answer to that, I guess. That's the honest answer.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

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

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct) the point that I had is around crop insurance. I brought it up with our standing committee and to Mr. Dave Aitken. Insurance for the peril of gravity. It's one of the opportunities that most farmers have for bonuses and for potatoes. To my knowledge that hasn't been added on as an allowable peril.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I don't believe gravity is - colour's there -

Mr. Henderson: Yeah.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: - we have improved storage. I don't believe gravity is.

Mr. Henderson: But I'm just wondering: Why that couldn't be put on?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I guess, in the crop insurance, in the last two years, we've made a lot of positive changes.

Mr. Henderson: Yeah, I'd agree with you.

Mr. Henderson: But we can't do everything and we have to get it approved by the federal system, too. It has to be (Indistinct) sound. We have the best insurance in Canada, as far as I'm concerned, crop insurance. We met with the grain industry this winter too. We meet with the commodities, we work with them to develop the best system and we're quite proud of that. It doesn't do everything. But I'm sure it will come up again next year.

Mr. Henderson: I think I'm encouraged

because some of the farmers in my riding, that's something that they say that they would be more inclined to get crop insurance if it would cover all the perils that they face, whether that's storage throughout the whole year, which I know you now have, and colour, and gravity is one of them, not only from weather related issues.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Your area, there has been quite a bit of interest in crop insurance. There is a lot of inquiries coming in from your area.

Mr. Henderson: That's a good thing.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: That's a good thing, too.

Mr. Henderson: I'm encouraging it, too, as well. I just would like to see if the department would push that a little more with the potato board to try to see if they could get that as a peril that would be covered over a period of time.

Mr. Webster: With reference to the potato industry, we consult with the potato board and they represent people from tip to tip. They asked us to review it and come back and see if we can put a program together. I'm high on the production insurance piece as a safety net system. There has been major changes in the last two years and we'll continue to take a look at it and see if we can be there for the producers that we have in the province so we can survive and sustain an industry.

Mr. Henderson: But gravity is certainly a specific peril that a farmer can get a lot of bonus. It can mean a lot of money, it can make or break them as far as within the saleability of their crop.

Mr. Webster: Colour was the big issue this year, hon. member.

Mr. Henderson: Yeah, exactly.

Mr. Webster: Because the cold weather last fall, that just threw everything into chaos with a few nights in a row below freezing temperatures, so that did (Indistinct) colour issue and that's been the big number one challenge for the whole winter.

Mr. Henderson: But it sounds like you've gotten that one somewhat corrected from a crop insurance perspective. Gravity should be the next one to slay.

Chair: Question from the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah. Minister, what was your payout for the insurance last year, the PEI insurance program, and a breakdown of sectors of the money that was paid out?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: That will come through the estimates.

Mr. Webster: We will have that in the estimates, but we've put out approximately \$20 million. For the 2008 crop we put out almost \$20 million total of all sectors. I believe it's about the same number for 2009 crop, which those claims will all be finished off, of this year, January, February and March.

Mr. Bagnall: Do you have a breakdown by sector?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I can give you the breakdown in total of our share of AgriInvest AgriStability production insurance. I don't have it per commodity or sector you're talking about.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, but you would have that information?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yes, we would have that information.

Mr. Bagnall: Would you bring that back the next time we come here? Because I'd like to see the breakdown of where the \$20 million is going. Is it broad spent or is it basically in one industry or where is it?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: You'll see most of it go into, I'm guessing, the potato industry, because that goes by value industry, right? I'll bring the numbers back and give it.

Mr. Bagnall: Because I'd like to see a breakdown for each sector.

I guess changing over here, basically, I'm looking at the hog industry now and we know that the hog numbers are dropping. They're down to about 85,000 now, I think, hogs that are being produced according to the hog people. If that rate continues, we're going to be very little - continue to drop. I guess my question is: Are you doing any subsidizing now at all for the hog industry? Have you put any money into the hog - have you put a program together to try to assist them?

Mr. Webster: We've been putting money in all along into the hog industry, for sure. The last number I heard we were at 100,000 hog production on PEI.

Mr. Bagnall: I was talking to hog people just recently and they said that number was - but they're down to about 85,000 now.

Mr. Webster: That's per annum. I can only go by the last number I had with them and it was 100,000, so it could have slipped a little more. They felt at that time we were at the bottom of the slippage, if you like, because one big producer had got out to flush his buildings out and clean his buildings out and he was ramping up again. So as he comes back on line it would make a significant difference because he is a large producer. I know hog prices, I believe, are about \$1.57

right now. They were a couple of days ago. It is moving upward.

Mr. Bagnall: It always moves up this time of year. Historically, it always has.

Mr. Webster: Yeah, well, there could be trends there. Without question, is it sustainable? Certainly barley prices are lower now, which 62% of the hog production is the cost of feed. We thoroughly discussed the fact that we have to feed them cheaper somehow.

Mr. Bagnall: What are they telling you cost of production is now?

Mr. Webster: It's about \$1.65 or \$1.66 or \$1.67 range, is the cost of production.

Mr. Bagnall: So minister, how much money have you put into the hog industry the past year for the producers? Could you give me a breakdown of how you distributed that to the producers?

Mr. Webster: We had an H1N1 hog loan program, a million bucks.

Mr. Bagnall: Is that just the loan program? Forgivable loan program?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: It's a loan program.

Mr. Webster: No, it's a re-collectable loan program, hopefully.

Mr. Bagnall: The same one we used to do, Brian?

Mr. Webster: I hope not.

Mr. Bagnall: You're planning on collecting on these then, are you?

Mr. Webster: We want to collect that and we're assuming hog prices will hit \$2.00

and we'll be able to collect it.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, well, I assumed that four years ago that they were going to hit \$2.00 and that hasn't happened yet. Don't hold your breath on that one, minister.

Mr. Webster: One dollar sixty cents is the trigger on when the repayment happens, and it's \$1.66 today. So, wow, the hog industry is in a profitable mode today. So it's great. Also, we put 400,000 into a transportation system which is -

Mr. Bagnall: Is that all used?

Mr. Webster: I don't believe it is. I stand to be corrected. It's ongoing. Any hog that leaves and heads for the market -

Mr. Bagnall: How long is that for now? Any hog that leaves in 2010 is going to get a freight subsidy?

Mr. Webster: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Regardless of how many we move?

Mr. Webster: That's correct.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. How much is that?

Mr. Webster: Four dollars a hog.

Mr. Bagnall: Four dollars a hog.

Mr. Webster: Which would be in Nova Scotia transportation.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, so what happens to the ones that go to Quebec, do they still only get \$4.00 too?

Mr. Webster: Yeah, they still only get \$4.00.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, wouldn't you

increase that for hogs going a long distance? I'm sure the cost to deliver them is a lot more.

Mr. Webster: Without question. We're trying to do as much as we could do to keep the Larsen plant open in Berwick, Nova Scotia. It seemed two buyers is better than one buyer. Everything had to go to duBreton in Quebec. It puts the industry at more risk or more peril. So we obviously came up with a flat rate there and the decision of the day was to leave it at a flat \$4.00.

Mr. Bagnall: Are we doing anything in value-added product in hogs?

Mr. Webster: Not that I'm aware of, no, because they're all sold off-Island.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. So is there any breeding program in effect for hogs now for our breeding stock, because we had genetics?

Mr. Webster: We still do. We have great genetics.

Mr. Bagnall: Are we doing anything for the genetic people that are selling?

Mr. Webster: We're paying part of a salary, Dan Hernick salary.

Mr. Bagnall: A contract with.

Mr. Webster: Yes, sir.

Mr. Bagnall: How much is that contract?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Forty-thousand dollars.

Mr. Bagnall: That's good money. That's a good program. Are we getting enough generic stuff being sold? Are we pushing that hard enough?

Mr. Webster: I think the quality here is phenomenal. We had very good genetics. That's why we were shipping hogs to Russia.

Mr. Bagnall: What we really should be doing - and I know our genetics are good and I know they're good here, but -

Mr. M. Currie: Did we touch any sections, are we just (Indistinct)?

Mr. Bagnall: Once we get going we'll be moving quicker on this.

I guess the problem I have there is the genetic program is fantastic as far as our breeding is concerned. But are we promoting that enough? Because we have the best breeding stock. When I was minister, Brian used to tell me we had the best breeding stock in the world here.

Mr. Webster: I think we still do. It's just we've got - in Canada we've got 32 million hogs produced annually, and there is only a market for 25 million. So, across Canada, total (Indistinct) picture, Saskatchewan and Manitoba were over-producing hogs to a large extent and that's why we're seeing the low returns.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, but not everybody has -

Mr. Webster: Now that has been corrected.

Mr. Bagnall: But not everybody has the genetics that we have, minister.

Mr. Webster: I agree with that.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess that's where I'm coming from, is that, how many of our good breeders in genetics have we lost? How many do we still have? Not everybody had good genetics, but there was a good few that did. Have we lost them?

Mr. Webster: That's a question for the hog board to answer on where they feel they are for sure. I -

Mr. Bagnall: What do you think, Brian?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: We still have the big ones there. Apple Valley's still there. I mean, Dan is working with them on a continual basis. So, it's a market that can grow, I mean, but you still have that market for the meat, too. That's the issue, too. I mean, we continue to work with AVC. We're lucky to have AVC on PEI, because that gets us an (Indistinct) -

Mr. Bagnall: Oh, no question.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: So we continue to push that. Russia's a new market, and there was a Russian delegation over here a month ago, looking. I'm optimistic that we'll continue to expand that (Indistinct) -

Mr. Bagnall: Have we got any orders or anything yet?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I think Dan had another order. I think there's -

Mr. Bagnall: Who?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I think Dan Hernick had another order coming in, but I can't - I mean, that's just a rumour. I can't confirm that.

Mr. Bagnall: No, that's good.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: (Indistinct) market. He's our ambassador.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes. There's no question.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: We think it's a you want to keep.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. Now, the next thing before we get into the line is the cow-calf operators. What have we done, what assistance have we given them in the last year? Because they're in worse trouble than the hog industry are, right now.

Mr. Webster: We have a (Indistinct).

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: We have a beef program. We've always had a beef development program -

Mr. Bagnall: What's that?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: We have, I believe, probably six or seven programs for the beef industry. I met with the beef industry as recently as this afternoon, and they're very content with what we're doing. Actually, their request is to establish cost of production, is what the request was this afternoon, to work with the university. So we know there's a price issue, and -

Mr. Bagnall: So they've very happy with what you're doing?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: They're happy with -

Mr. Bagnall: What are you doing? Tell me what you're doing.

Mr. Webster: We have a beef industry initiative program, it's been extended one year, 220,000.

Mr. Bagnall: What's that for? Who gets that money?

Mr. Webster: That's for breeding stock, I believe, is it? And then we have a beef quality improvement program, it's 126,000.

Mr. Bagnall: Who gets that money? Does that go into any - does any of that money go into the producers' hands?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: It all goes into the producers' hands. These are all programs for the producers. They're all based -

Mr. Bagnall: They're getting cheques for this?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: If they follow certain requirements for the program, yes, they are getting.

Mr. Bagnall: If they follow certain requirements. What are the requirements that they have to follow to get a cheque?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: In the case of handling facilities, we're funding handling facilities.

Mr. Bagnall: What's that?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: We're funding handling facilities -

Mr. Bagnall: Handling facilities?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yes. They're eligible for 50% of the cost, up to -

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct).

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: - up to \$2,000. Heifer replacement program, \$150 for heifer replacement.

Mr. Bagnall: So if they go out and buy a heifer, they get 150 bucks?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yes. The enhanced herd health, \$40 per cow-calf care.

Mr. Bagnall: What was that again?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: For the enhanced herd health program.

Mr. Bagnall: Hanced?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Enhanced.

Mr. Webster: Enhanced.

Mr. Bagnall: Enhanced herd health?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yes. They're eligible for assistance of \$40 per cow-calf pair.

Mr. Bagnall: How many have taken up on that program?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I haven't got those numbers in front of me. I don't -

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: There was - actually, I do. There were 75 applicants. In the enhanced herd health component we spent \$160,000 in that area. Fifty-five applicants under the handling facilities, \$60,000.

Mr. Bagnall: Fifty-five, and you gave out \$60,000?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yes, and that was for the fund for 50% of up to \$2,000 for handling facilities. Genetic enhancement premium. There were 60 applicants, we gave out \$105,000 for that. So these are all - and these are ongoing programs, so we are putting money in the hands of the producers in these different areas, and the objective is to continue to improve the quality of the cattle here in Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. Do I have copies of those programs in here?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I have -

Mr. Bagnall: I don't think I do.

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: I have copies of them here, but if you keep taking away my copies I'll have nothing to give you.

Mr. Bagnall: Will you table those? I'd like to -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - because I'm getting a lot of - saying the department is not putting any money into their hands, and -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - you're saying they are, so would you table those programs for me?

Brian Douglas Deputy Minister: Yes. I can table those.

Mr. Webster: We should keep in mind as well, hon. member, that we are putting a significant amount of money in the beef plant, and that's the market. That's the piece of it that we need to protect and preserve and try to get healthy.

Mr. Bagnall: I understand that, minister, but if you don't have any cows or any animals to take to the beef plant, then that's the problem we're into. We're losing numbers at a drastic rate.

Mr. Webster: The lead guy -

Mr. Bagnall: Sixteen per cent a year.

Mr. Webster: The lead individual in the cattlemen's group, who is a board member on the beef plant, told me that he feels that we're bottomed out and we're holding our supplies and volumes where they need to be for livestock, so that, for beef - that's what he told me about a month ago. He doesn't think -

Mr. Bagnall: Well, according -

Mr. Webster: - it'll go any lower.

Mr. Bagnall: According to their figures that they gave us, they've lost 16% a year for the last two years, and we haven't got this year yet, of course, because it's only new, but if - and I think those numbers came out at our standing committee, if I remember correctly. It was 16% a year that we were losing in the beef industry. At that time there seemed to be no levelling out with the figures that we were getting.

Mr. Webster: He advised me, as I told you, hon. member, that he -

Mr. Bagnall: Who advised you?

Mr. Webster: John Colwill.

Mr. Bagnall: Who?

Mr. Webster: John Colwill.

Mr. Bagnall: John. Okay.

Mr. Webster: Told me that he felt they were bottomed out at this point in time. Now the beef plant is getting a substantial amount of animals per week. They're getting 220, 230, 240, what they need.

Mr. Bagnall: How many of those are coming from PEI? How many are coming from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick?

Mr. Webster: There's only 15%. There's a small amount coming from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The majority of them are coming from Prince Edward Island.

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

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct) those feeders that would be coming from Nova Scotia and

New Brunswick over to the Island and finished here, would be what traditionally happened.

But, anyway, I guess my question regarding the beef plant is: How are you establishing the price for beef to the producer at the plant? I know at one time we were talking like 7 cents back at the Ontario price. Is that still the case?

Mr. Webster: I believe that's still to be the case.

Mr. Henderson: Has there been any thought to try to work on somewhat an independent market on that? I know that was my biggest issue when I was a beef producer and wanting to sign up and join in the Atlantic beef, was simply that issue, and when you're pegged into a price that's established in Ontario, but yet your market forces are really more local in the Maritimes or whatever.

Mr. Webster: It's hard to have a regional variation in pricing, without question that, otherwise you get more product imported into Atlantic Canada from Upper Canada and western Canada as well, so the number is 7 cents less Ontario price, which is -

Mr. Henderson: But that's outside our region, do you see what I'm saying? You're trying to compete with something that's outside your region on what you take in as income, but yet you're dealing with your expense side of your balance sheet is more regional, from the Maritimes' perspective.

Mr. Webster: Yes. I know, your point's well taken, for sure. Obviously, we're trying to create a price as high as we can obviously, but the other discussion surrounding what's been going on with the beef plant is looking at branding.

Mr. Henderson: Yes.

Mr. Webster: There's been discussion around that to try to get a higher price in the marketplace, but if you go to the big distributors you have to meet the competition from elsewhere, so your price has to be there.

Mr. Henderson: But that's very hard to ever benefit the producer because he's based on an Ontario price, So I mean, that's where I see the dichotomy of the problem for Atlantic beef. We don't even scratch the surface on what the market is for beef in Atlantic Canada because we're importing a lot of product.

Mr. Webster: True. It's like corn and beans. They're established by the Chicago Exchange, you know-

Mr. Henderson: I know.

Mr. Webster: - which is a long piece away, but it does have a profound effect on how we market.

The downsizing that has happened within the beef industry is partly driven by the cost of feed. We all know where there was a food source that was very good and it dried up and it went somewhere else. That has hurt the beef price and added cost of production to producing beef. So that is probably the single biggest issue, that and BSE -

Mr. Henderson: Oh.

Mr. Webster: - at the wrong time and soft Canadian prices.

Mr. Henderson: But is there some sort of a written agreement that we have to be seven cents back, or can we go just to what the Canadian market will be, or is seven cents normally what it would be if there wasn't any kind of a written agreement?

Mr. Webster: The beef plant's been

struggling and facing challenges to have a balance sheet that is reasonable. They felt that in order to get the animals they would have to pay - if the producer had to pay seven cents for transportation to Ontario, if they paid that price, that high, then that would allow them to get access to the cattle, because they have to have access to the cattle as well. A beef plant's no good without cattle -

Mr. Henderson: Yeah.

Mr. Webster: - and cattle production's no good without the beef plant, so we have to try to survive both of them, and get them into profitability at some point.

Mr. Henderson: No, I agree. Anyway, it's a good discussion. I just wanted to throw that out.

Mr. Webster: Sure, sure.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, I'm hearing - we're getting, I understand, a hamburger line at the -

Mr. Webster: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: - at the beef - is it up in operation yet?

Mr. Webster: No. They're waiting for one piece. There's some part they're missing, and it will be going shortly.

Mr. Bagnall: But they're still selling the hamburg meat, but not ground up, right?

Mr. Webster: They're still selling the trim in boxes -

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Mr. Webster: - and they're shipping it to Moncton, or whatever, and having it ground into hamburger there. So someone else is capturing their profits.

Mr. Bagnall: What I'm hearing from abattoirs and other people that are buying it is that they can buy that product in for between 80 and 90 cents from New Zealand, and they have to pay \$1.20 for the product at Borden. They're saying: We're right here on PEI, we're 50 miles away or less, and we have to pay almost 40% more in cost to get that product. Why is that happening?

Mr. Webster: Obviously, you have to sell all of the animal to try to get a return. We're realizing that that's still not giving us enough return for the animal, because the balance sheet is still challenged there. So we're going to try to produce hamburger ourselves, put the investment into the line and meet the market that way, and see if we can find profitability.

Mr. Bagnall: But minister, if we're going to be 40% higher in cost, we're not going to sell the product. The problem being is that if a meat shop can buy New Zealand beef, delivered to their door, for 80 to 90 cents -

Mr. Campbell: Call the hour.

Mr. Bagnall: - and have to pay a dollar and -

Chair: Members, the hour has been called.

Mr. Bagnall: - forty, we've got a problem.

Mr. Webster: That's the challenge we have, hon. member.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a 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 that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, Friday, at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at 10:00 a.m.

