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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



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Speaker: Hon. Kathleen M. Casey

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Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (I)

Speaker (Biggar): The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

I had the opportunity on Saturday to watch a little EastLink Channel 10 with my daughter Julia. We watched the ceremonies out at UPEI, and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all the graduates. But also take this opportunity to congratulate all the staff and the professors and everyone out at the university, and Wade MacLaughlin, for the great job they're doing. It takes a lot of organization to obviously put on a graduation ceremony. So congratulate them on that. But importantly to the graduates, all the best in the future.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd also like to rise today and welcome everyone to the gallery today. And a get well to our assistant clerk today who is out sick. It's too bad that she is going to miss today's proceedings. Also, I'd like to send out a get well, or congratulations that she is well now - my mother-in-law actually got home on the weekend after having a mini-stroke the previous week. Was in the hospital. She's gotten home and she is feeling amazingly well. Annie Craig from

Victoria. She's coming along great. All the family were there Sunday for Mother's Day and it was just a great weekend.

Also, from my own district, I had a great friend pass away on the weekend, Barry Wood, a businessman, a business colleague in the community. Did a lot of work. Was in real estate at the end. Just a fine gentleman. Had a heart attack on the weekend and passed away. I attended his wake last night and large crowds there. I just want to say my condolences to the family.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to rise and welcome everyone to the gallery, and a special welcome to my wife Linda and my youngest son Jonathan, and my mother-in-law and father-in-law Bob and Mary Morse.

Also, I'd like to say hello to everyone back home in the District of Evangeline-Miscouche and encourage everyone to come out to the public meeting on the activity on where the new recreation centre is going to be and how it's coming along.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to also recognize all our visitors in the gallery today. A special welcome to the family of the Government House Leader

who are visiting from the Miscouche area.

As mentioned earlier by the Premier, I had the privilege to attend the UPEI convocation exercises Saturday morning. I think there was approximately 260 smiling faces came across and received their diploma. I just would also like to congratulate all those students. I know for many of them they'll be out in their new careers, but for some, they'll be returning to take some other further studies. I'd like to wish them all the best, and also to say hello to all the watchers from the Sherwood area who are watching on EastLink. I hope they're having a wonderful day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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 to the gallery and also to echo my colleagues, the hon. Premier and the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood. I, too, had the honour of representing the province at UPEI for the afternoon session. It was very professional, to the organization and the students. It was just a wonderful event to attend.

It was especially important for me to attend, and the fact that Don MacKenzie, when I was a child, he was a mover and shaker and a community man in the O'Leary region, and he was getting an honorary degree. So that made it kind of personal that day. Also, my father's sister, Fairly Yeo, received her degree that day. That was kind of a surprise to me. I didn't know she was going through in the afternoon session. It was a very wonderful afternoon and I congratulate the

colleagues and the students for such a remarkable day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

It's a pleasure to welcome everyone to the public gallery here today. In particular, the family members of our hon. Government House Leader, to Linda and Jonathan and Linda's parents. Everybody I guess in the Miscouche area knows Linda as being one of the proponents of Scooters Dairy Bar and Take Out. I think it would be fair to say it would give Gillis's in Montague a run for its money for sure.

I want to say a special hello today to Francenia Perry who celebrated her birthday over the weekend. I had the opportunity to attend a great celebration at St. Mary's Hall on Saturday night. A fine lady and a great supporter.

As well, I want to extend my sympathy and condolences to the family of Cindy Bruce who passed away over the weekend. Cindy was a great lady and a fine mother and wife as well, and to her husband David and her three boys, Kent, Jamie and Troy and all their families, my deepest sympathy.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to rise and welcome the guests in

the gallery - there is a lot of familiar faces - and to the folks that are visiting the first time, I do wish you all the best.

There are two sisters in Summerside that I would like to acknowledge, Blanche Jewell and Verna McKenna. They watch us faithfully and they enjoy the proceedings every day. So I do wish them very well.

Also, my mother-in-law, I note she is watching as well. She was under the weather last week with the flu-like symptoms and I think she is feeling better now, so that's great.

Also, the farmers are out on the land. It's a bit cloudy weather but there has been very little rain and the soil is in perfect condition. The seeds are going in the ground with the hopes of a great harvest this fall. So we do wish our farmers very well.

Also, the Moncton Wildcats did win their eastern division. Four Islanders play on that team. So we congratulate those folks as well. I'd like to bring greetings to all those watching on EastLink out there and I hope they enjoy the proceedings of the day.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I want to welcome everyone in the gallery and especially Cheryl Jewell. She is a nurse by profession but she's a dairy farmer from the heart, I believe. She and Kevin run Jewell Dale Farms in the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's riding. Just a terrific family and a terrific group of Holsteins out at that herd.

I want to also want to welcome all the rest in the gallery and those from my riding who may be watching. Just note, too, to everyone else who watches t.v., the Habs only have nine more wins.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to rise and welcome everyone to the public gallery today. It was a great weekend to see all our graduates receiving degrees. As Minister of Health and Wellness it was great to see those that are entering the health profession and are going to be retained here on Prince Edward Island. I certainly concur with the remarks of the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, it was a great hockey game last night, it was awesome.

But in our community today, our community is mourning the death of Wayne Buote, and I want to pass along deepest sympathies to Lise and their family. Wayne has been a very important business person in our area with the North Rustico Home Hardware. So our thoughts and prayers go out to the sudden loss in that family.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Greenan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to stand and greet the people in the public gallery, the regulars and also our visitors and our special visitors above me, Linda and Jonathan and Linda's parents.

Saturday evening I was able to attend a

benefit for a constituent of yours, Amelia Perry, a young girl who has a debilitating disease. It was held at the Miscouche Legion and it was quite successful.

I'd like to extend my greetings to everyone home from District 22 Summerside-St. Eleanors. I just remind the people from that area that are watching that tonight the Summerside Historical Society is meeting, and that one of its great supporters and a supporter of mine will be in attendance, and that's Blanche Hogg. Also, I want to say special greetings to Dale McIsaac, who has joined us in the gallery.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Island graduates from Nova Scotia Agricultural College

Ms. Dunsford: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This past weekend hundreds of Islanders graduated from universities and colleges all over the Maritimes, over 700 from UPEI alone.

I had the honour of representing the Province of Prince Edward Island at the 2010 convocation at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro, Nova Scotia. I met some great people, including co-presidents Dr. Leslie MacLaren and Dr. Bernie MacDonald, Nova Scotia's Minister of Agriculture, John MacDonell, and several professors and students.

Among the greatest people at this event were six Island graduates. These young men

are industrious, innovative and ambitious, and as members of this House, and as Islanders, we can be very proud of their accomplishments.

Shawn Loo from Springfield received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies with Honours. Shawn was also the recipient of an NSAC Student Leadership Award in Outstanding Communication for his exemplary work on the school newspaper.

Mark Roop of Charlottetown received a Bachelor of Technology degree in Environmental Horticulture with Honours. Both Shawn and Mark are continuing with their education and studying for master's degrees. In fact, Shawn flew to Calgary yesterday to begin his studies at the University of Calgary.

Cody MacCormack of Souris, and Tim Murphy of Augustine Cove, received Diplomas of Technology in Enterprise Management-Farming Technology.

Cole Noonan of Albany and Logan Jewell of Cornwall both earned Diplomas of Technology in Enterprise Management-Dairy Farming Technology. As the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford mentioned, Cheryl Jewell is with us today, and she is the mother of Logan Jewell.

The future of this Island and its people depend on the ingenuity and creativity of recent graduates such as these. They represent a new energy with the ability to transform and improve upon our current agricultural, environmental and business practices. We are indebted to them already for their boldness and foresight and for taking the steps needed to further their knowledge and experience in their chosen fields.

Congratulations to recent graduates of

NSAC Shawn, Mark, Cody, Tim, Cole and Logan. We are very proud of all of you and wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Russell Jones receives Douglas MacMaster Memorial Occupational Health and Safety Award

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise today to recognize a person dedicated to the health and safety of everyone he works with. When it comes to promoting workplace safety, there are few individuals that take this as seriously as Russell Jones from Portage. Russell is the maintenance tradesperson at the Community Hospital in O'Leary. Recently he was presented the Douglas MacMaster Memorial Occupational Health and Safety Award by the Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry. This award celebrates individual or team accomplishments by government employees in the promotion of health and safety.

Russell and his maintenance staff and the Community Hospital in O'Leary are very worthy of this award. We can take comfort in the knowledge that Russell takes the health and safety of all who work with him seriously so they can continue to work together for the good of the Community Hospital. We in the O'Leary-Inverness community wish him well in the continuous maintenance he and his staff put into O'Leary Community Hospital.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Education for All

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise today to raise awareness of an important issue.

Last week I was thrilled to receive a banner of student signatures from Edwena Arbuckle's grade 5 class at Montague Consolidated. They were representing a group called Education for All which encourages government funding for education. The commitment to education from these young ones is tremendous, and I am so proud to have this class in my riding.

Education for All is a global movement led by UNESCO. Education for All strives to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. The movement was launched in 1990 at the world conference on Education for All in Thailand. Representatives of the international community agreed to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade. In 2000, the international community reaffirmed its commitment in a conference in Senegal.

Schools all over the world participate in Education for All. Their banners and messages are to encourage governments and countries around the world to increase funding for education and ensure every child has a chance to go to school and learn.

Education is the cement of our society. PEI is blessed with tremendous human resources, but they need to be cultivated through formal education. It is a priority that all Islanders get equal opportunity to education.

I'm thankful for the work of Ms. Arbuckle's grade 5 class at Montague Consolidated. What an important initiative for them to take.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all members and everyone watching today to support this cause. I might say that the Premier and I - I presented a banner to the Premier down in the library on the weekend, and they had a picture showing, taking place -

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - that was moving this through the government. I understand that the Premier will be talking to the Prime Minister on this same issue, and maybe passing the banner on to him as we go along.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Liquor commission (further)

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, I'd like to table questions asked by the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir on Thursday regarding head office renovations and Stratford liquor store.

Questions by Members

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

Ban on year-round Sunday shopping

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

My first question today is for the Premier. Premier, you promised to place Islanders first. You promised, also, to have an open and accountable government. I'm just wondering if you could tell Islanders today what was the logic you, and you alone, used to ban Sunday shopping in this province?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Obviously, in the Province of Prince Edward Island, we have a system in place now where Sunday shopping does open after the May long weekend, which is coming up in a couple of weeks. Of course, it's opened up all the way until after Christmas, right around Christmas time.

We know that prior to two years ago Sunday shopping in the province was, I believe, the first five or six weeks prior to Christmas. We changed that. Myself and the hon. member, actually, together. I was in opposition. He was in government. We changed that together and made it so that it's opened up during the tourist season. We heard from a lot of tourist operators in the province with regards to arriving here and not having access to stores. So we think that it's a very fine balance between preserving a day of rest and making sure that our economy is able to handle that.

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

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

I would like for the Premier, I guess, to help Islanders understand why you made this decision. Certainly there must have been - somebody lobbied you to not allow year-round Sunday shopping. Could you tell us were you lobbied by anyone to stop year-

round Sunday shopping in this province?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Interesting you asked that. I had the privilege the other night to go out to dinner with the Pages. We went to a restaurant around the corner. There was a group of about probably 15 people at a table on the way out. They all asked me to stop. They wanted to ask me a question and they wanted to ask me a question on Sunday shopping.

They said: What's the story with Sunday shopping, Mr. Premier? I said: What's your opinion on Sunday shopping? Being a typical politician I wanted to hear from them. They indicated to me that they have to work on Sundays now when Sunday shopping is open. They don't want to do that. They said that they want to spend time with their family on Sundays and they're not happy, in fact, that we're even open for the eight months that we're open now.

I had to explain to them that it's a balance. That I realize that, for them, it's not the most opportune legislation that's in place, that they work on Sundays. But for others it's something that's very important. As a government we believe in striking a balance and we believe that the legislation that is currently in place - that I voted for, the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, that the Member from Montague-Kilmuir voted for - Madam Speaker, is a balanced approach.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, the Premier did not answer the question and what I think is - he said our government made this decision.

I understand it, you made the decision. So

I'm wondering. Were you lobbied by any group or individuals to ban Sunday shopping in this province?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: I just indicated to the hon. member that I was lobbied by a group of 15 people at a restaurant last Thursday night, I believe, when we went out, Madam Speaker.

When it came to Sunday shopping in the province there was a lot of individuals that had a lot of strong feelings on Sunday shopping, both ways.

Prior to Sunday shopping being in place after the May long weekend, when it was only the six weeks before Christmas, I will admit, I was lobbied extensively by the tourism industry in the province with regards to families or individuals arriving here in the summertime for their summer vacation, saying that they get here on a Sunday - if they're at a cottage, they're unable to go get groceries or they're unable to go get their case of beer or whatever they want to get.

That's why I supported the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters in voting in favour of legislation that I believe is a compromise, where we now have it in place for eight months a year.

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

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

What the Premier has actually done - and you did it alone, Premier, it was your decision - what you have done is deprived Islanders of millions of dollars of revenue and also a lot of jobs for our business community across Prince Edward Island.

You went against the wishes of Islanders, against the wishes of the business community and against the wishes of the standing committee who went across this province to hear from Islanders. It came back very clear that they wanted year-round Sunday shopping. So will you give us some sort of any idea or your logic - yours alone - why you made that decision to ban it?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

For any tourist that might be in the gallery, I think it's important to point out that the hon. member who's asking me these questions was actually a member of the government for 11 years prior to moving over to the opposition benches. He had 11 years to enact legislation to be able to introduce year-round Sunday shopping. He, for some reason, didn't do that.

But I will admit his government did come in with a compromise, and that compromise was that they opened up Sunday shopping from the May long weekend all the way through to Christmas. When I was in opposition, similar to what they do now - very rarely - but I supported the government of today on the changing of that legislation. Or I'm pretty sure I did. I think it's a good idea and it's a good compromise and I think that the compromise that is currently in place is something that's very important.

The hon. member also raises an important issue when it comes to tax revenue in the province. We are going to do an analysis to look at the revenue that we gain over the months where Sunday shopping is in place vs. the months that it's not in place to see if, in fact, we are losing a lot of business. If we are, we'll revisit it.

But I've been told by a lot of businesses that

essentially what happens is you take the six days that they're in operation, you move to seven days, and really you just spread those six days over into seven. So the extra day doesn't add anything at all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, what I heard from the business community and the chamber was just the opposite.

They wanted Sunday shopping, they encouraged Sunday shopping, and they were open to be competitive against the other provinces. So, Premier, will you offer some hope to the business community and to Islanders that you will announce year-round Sunday shopping in this session of the Legislature?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: No, I will not introduce it in this session of the Legislature, Madam Speaker.

I'll tell you what I tell a lot of the individuals that are in favour of Sunday shopping year-round. They come to me and say: Why can't we have - Wayne Thibodeau, wherever he is, I don't see him here. He's a huge proponent of year-round Sunday shopping. He loves asking that question -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Premier Ghiz: - every time he gets the opportunity. I'm complimenting the media. This is a very important issue for Wayne Thibodeau.

But I tell the people that want year-round Sunday shopping that up until three years ago we only had it for six weeks. We came in, supported the previous government when we came in, and we maintained eight months a year of Sunday shopping. So essentially we went from six weeks to eight months. So people that are looking for an improvement, I think they have it.

The people out there that don't think we should have Sunday shopping whatsoever, I say to them that every other province in Canada has it, but here in the Province of Prince Edward Island we have four months where we do not have Sunday shopping in place. I think it's the responsibility of a government to make sure that we come in with a balanced approach and that's exactly what we're doing here.

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

Mr. M. Currie: But, Madam Speaker, the people have spoken.

You already went out with a standing committee and went across Prince Edward Island and heard from tens upon tens of Island businesses and people. The recommendation was that they wanted year-round Sunday shopping. They wanted to be competitive. They wanted to be part of the business community in this province and they did not want to see those revenues drive over the bridge to Moncton and other places.

So, Premier, will you please introduce year-round Sunday shopping in this province in this session?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I find it quite ironic that the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters is now asking for year-round Sunday shopping when he had 11 years to introduce the same legislation when he was in government and he didn't. Because he realizes that government must take balanced approaches. That's exactly what we're doing, as our government is doing. That's exactly what we're going to continue to do.

Now we're going to look at it from a tax perspective. Look at the sales taxes that we've taken in during the months that we're open vs. the months we're not. We'll prorate it based on the tourists that come in at that point of year and we'll see exactly whether or not government is, in fact, losing revenue to people moving to, or shopping in, Moncton or Halifax.

If there is a huge discrepancy in place, it is something that we will look at in the future. But for the immediate future, Madam Speaker, we believe that the legislation that is in place is a very balanced approach for Islanders.

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

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

As you can see, we're not getting very many answers from the Premier, and he wants to see Islanders to go shopping off this province.

ITSS contract (further)

So I'll go to the minister of finance. Back a few weeks ago, minister, you promised you were going to bring information back from Accreon, a company in New Brunswick that's doing some IT work in this province. Did you bring that information back today?

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

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

I think he's alluding to the contracts that we were talking about with the individuals we've hired to help with our renovations inside of ITSS. I have those in a file at my office, as a matter of fact. Today they just sent them across. I have those contracts and I'll bring them forward.

It gives me a great opportunity to speak about the renovations that are taking place inside this division of my department. We have had some tremendous inroads made with regard to the larger clients in our portfolio, with ITSS, under the guidance Allan MacDonald. We are so fortunate to have someone of his ability to bring forward all of these changes that we had to put in place so that we could make ITSS a very viable and strong entity.

Thank you very much.

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

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

Minister of finance, could you please tell us today, then, how many contracts Accreon got since Mr. Allan MacDonald has been retained by you to work in this province?

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

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

The number of contracts that Accreon has actually bid on and won, I can bring back and provide that to the House. Be very

happy to do that. There has been one major contract that has come out, Accreon bid on it. Were not, unfortunately, the winners of that. But it's very nice to have another competitor here on Prince Edward Island to ensure Islanders that we are getting the best bang for our spending dollar over there.

But whenever Accreon is involved, due diligence is done with regard to the accusations that the hon. member is asking about.

Thank you very much.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, the minister of finance promised almost a month ago to bring this information back and it still seems to be sitting on his desk.

Premier Ghiz: How do you know?

Mr. M. Currie: Minister - he just said it was. Minister, are you aware that Accreon was awarded a contract with the Workers Compensation Board for around 500,000? Were you aware of that contract also?

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

Premier Ghiz: They're a separate entity.

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

If Accreon was awarded a contract with the Workers Compensation Board, all the more power to them. As I said, it's very important here on Prince Edward Island to make sure that anyone that's contracting and tendering - that's part of the Atlantic Procurement Agreement. We want to make sure that it's an open, transparent process. Workers Compensation Board, as the hon. member

would know, is very much an arm's-length corporation away from government. We have no say in their business model. I have no impact whatsoever with who would do their IT work.

Thank you very much.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, could you please tell me if Mr. Allan MacDonald has severed all his ties with Accreon in Fredericton, New Brunswick?

An Hon. Member: You don't like this guy.

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

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

Premier Ghiz: I don't even know who he is.

Mr. Sheridan: Allan MacDonald severed his ties with Accreon last August. Everything from every aspect of his business with Accreon.

As I've said a number of times here in this House, and always to this hon. member of the Legislature, Allan MacDonald is one of three people that could have ever administered these changes that we needed to take place inside of ITSS.

Very similar to what the Premier was saying to this member just moments ago, these are the kinds of things that needed to take place 11 years ago. When they did bring ITSS - this is the IT Shared Services - inside of government, and decide to consolidate them all in the central agency of provincial treasury, it was a great idea, but you cannot cut it to the quick. You have to leave the

resources there that allow this group to go forward and do what is needed in the IT side, with all of the major clients.

When I talk about that, we're talking about education, now the community services, and health and wellness. We need to be able to answer their needs in the IT field, and because of the cuts that the previous administration made to this division there was no way they could go forward. We needed to revamp the whole system.

Under the guidance of a very capable Allan MacDonald, we are making strides that have never been seen on Prince Edward Island.

Premier Ghiz: You like the guy and he doesn't.

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

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

Minister, will you confirm to me that he's not a shareholder, he's not a director, and he's not a consultant for Accreon? That's what I want to hear from you.

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

Mr. Sheridan: Yes, yes, yes, and yes. We will bring all of that information as well, Madam Speaker.

I want to ensure myself, and everyone that was involved in government, that Allan MacDonald had severed all ties with Accreon. This is the kind of thing that happens inside of business all the time. When you're looking for these types of individuals - and as I said, maybe three people in the Maritime provinces were capable of doing this - you have to come from somewhere. They have to come from a

background that has all the intelligence that's needed for ITSS renovation.

I make no bones about it. We went out looking for the very best individual to do this, and yes, he has to have a very strong background in this. What I was able to get from his lawyer was the fact of when he finished with Accreon, when the last minute of the business statement, when he last attended a meeting as a shareholder, when he gave up all of his shares, when he gave up his title, and when he left the board of directors.

Thank you very much.

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

Mr. M. Currie: I'm just wondering why, about a month ago, you indicated that if Mr. MacDonald was evaluating any IT work for government that he would remove himself from the process if Accreon was bidding.

So, if there's not a conflict, I'm just wondering why he had to remove himself from that business.

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

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

Of course, as we all know, it's all about optics in this business. We have to take one extra step to make sure that you're over and above this. We're not ever going to concede to taking the second best person possible out there in the marketplace to allow us to move this movement forward. We took the very best person that was out there in the market. We brought him forward. I'm thrilled with the work that he's been able to do.

Just as the hon. member has spoken about,

we had AI step aside whenever these important decisions were being made on evaluations inside of tender work. That's not his bailiwick anyway. All of the directorship that's in place would oversee all of these kinds of tender evaluations, ensuring that it would be an open and transparent process that we could happily show to anyone inside the Legislature.

Thank you very much.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, that's the reason why I'm asking the questions.

Because we are getting calls from the IT community in this province. They are concerned that you are using somebody else outside of this province. Are you indicating to the IT community in this province that they're not qualified to do any of this work that you're giving to Accreon?

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

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

We know this IT business on Prince Edward Island very well. This hon. member knows it as well as I do, and we know who is available inside this province. Are they willing to step down from their firm, that's a multi-million dollar firm, to take a job inside of government for piddly amounts of money that would every be paid by the provincial treasury to oversee a transformation?

The dollars that we're paying to Allan MacDonald would never entice the owners of DeltaWare to ever step aside and come work for government.

Is there anyone else on Prince Edward

Island that could have done the transformation that Allan MacDonald has overseen? I haven't seen it. They'd have to come forward and show us.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Minister, you also hired another IT expert from Montreal, a Mr. Jean Poirier. Is he still retained with your department at \$1,200 a day?

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

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Imagine. Almost as bad as a lawyer.

Mr. Sheridan: Jean Yves Poirier has been brought forward from Montreal. As I said, we went out looking for the very best people possible for this transformation. We found this individual working on the infrastructure portion of our business. We needed it overhauled as well, and Jean Yves Poirier has been invaluable. He, as a matter of fact, saved us countless dollars with regard to our service here on Prince Edward Island.

We are doing great things for the clients here, with ITSS and for the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island. These people are well worth the money that we're paying them to allow us to go forward, to make these savings for Islanders.

Thank you very much.

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

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

Is Mr. Poirier still retained with your department?

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

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

That's a great question by the hon. member, asking whether Jean Yves Poirier is still with us on contract. He is, as a matter of fact, still with us. The problem with it is that we have advertised now across Canada twice for this position, and everyone comes back to tell us that we're not paying enough. We can't seem to find anyone. This started out internally, then it went to the Maritime provinces, then we've gone across Canada twice with the advertisements for this position, trying to find a director of infrastructure, and it's difficult with IT for Prince Edward Island.

Our classifications don't quite allow us to get the person that we need for this position at that rate. Jean Yves Poirier has continued to give us excellent advice in this area, and it's great that we've been able to retain him during this period where we haven't been able to find a replacement.

Thank you.

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

Mr. M. Currie: You also indicated, minister, that there were some positions that were still not filled at the IT side. Have all the positions been filled at the IT section?

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

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

As I just spoke about, we cannot find anyone yet for the infrastructure directorship. It's been an incredible search process. We now have four of the five filled for this transformation, and we're ready to go out and advertise for the COO's position, which is the seat filled by Allan MacDonald at this time, and we have a few candidates that have been in asking about what we are going to do with this position. Two of them are from away right now and know that we need someone to continue this transformation once Al MacDonald's contract expires.

We are ready to go to market on that one, and there's one directorship still outstanding. As well, we're having problems attracting someone inside of security. IT security, again, a very difficult position to fill. Everyone in the global community is looking for someone with regard to security.

Thank you very much.

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

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

So, minister of finance, you are, as you promised, for the second time, that you are going to bring this information back, a complete accounting of Mr. Al MacDonald's contract, total amount, any work Accreon got, and a complete accounting of Mr. Poirier's work that he's doing here and the total cost. You'll bring that all back? Tomorrow.

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

Mr. Sheridan: Thank you very much,

Madam Speaker.

The hon. member should remember I brought him the information on Al MacDonald. He has that contract inside his -

Mr. M. Currie: (Indistinct).

Mr. Sheridan: That's what you have is all the contract information on Al MacDonald, Madam Speaker.

Again, we make no bones about the amount that's paid. Is it a lot of money for us as Islanders? A lot of money as for myself? No question, it's rich. But when you try to find these individuals on the open market to do the types of work that we needed, it is difficult to find.

More than happy to bring forward the information on Jean Yves Poirier. The hon. member has never asked for contracts with regard to Accreon before. We've talked about contracts for people that are working for us. That stuff is all inside of a file. They told me that that would be available tomorrow for me to bring forward to the House, and we will bring that, Madam Speaker, at that time.

Thank you very much.

An Hon. Member: Table it.

Some Hon. Members: Table it.

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

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Build PEI signs

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Premier.

Mr. Premier, while driving through our

beautiful Island, through our cities, our towns, our countryside, our environmental beauty is being obstructed by large signs with the words Build PEI on it.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, one might also be confused, one might also be confused that we may be in the middle of an election by all the signs that you're putting up.

To the Premier. Can you give me a price on how much government has spent on these signs?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Priceless, Madam Speaker, would be my answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Ghiz: As the hon. member knows, back about two and a half years ago, our government had the foresight to introduce the largest capital budget ever in the history of this province, at \$510 million over a five-year period.

Basically, what that infrastructure, that capital budget, has done is it has allowed Prince Edward Island to be the only province in Canada not to fall into recession last year. What we're doing is we're trying to rebuild our province where we've seen 11 years of neglect. Whether or not we're talking about the roads in our province, the hospitals, the manors in this province, the schools in his riding. That's what our government's doing, is we're making sure that Prince Edward Island is going to be built for the future, Madam Speaker, so that all Islanders can enjoy our beautiful Island province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Construction of West Royalty school

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Minister, recently the government has undertaken two major projects in the district of West Royalty-Springvale. These are the upgrades to the West Royalty Elementary School and the Sleepy Hollow correctional facility. Can the minister provide this House and update on the construction of the West Royalty school?

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

Mr. MacKinley: What we're doing there, we're putting an addition on the West Royalty school to provide space for five kindergarten classes, and some support space for those. I believe (Indistinct), Murphy and Macleod - Williams, Murphy & Macleod - got the contract. We're expecting it to be done by August of this year.

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

Sleepy Hollow correctional facility

Mr. Dumville: Supplementary, Madam Speaker.

Could he also give us an update on the correctional facility? I noticed on television it was quite an impressive looking -

An Hon. Member: It's in your riding.

Mr. Dumville: Yes.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of

Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Mr. MacKinley: I don't know if that's where all the convicts are in his riding or not, but that's where the correctional centre is.

There's 10,000 square feet, roughly, there. It's to add extra space for 48 individuals. It's going to be done sometime in August also, or maybe a little later. It's on schedule, I know that, and there are people working at it. It should be done sometime in August or maybe even June this year.

Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Kindergarten children assessments

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Gallant: Mr. Minister, you reported last week that assessments were underway across the province for children entering kindergarten this September. Are these assessments still taking place, Mr. Minister?

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

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

Part of our government's commitment is early intervention in the public school system. Over the last number of months, obviously we're bringing forward a plan to renew and revitalize the early childhood sector. Most importantly, we're transitioning 1,400 five-year-olds into the public school

system. Part of that transition, for the first time in the history of the province, we'll be bringing in a university screening tool which was designed by Dr. Doug Willms from the University of New Brunswick.

Over the last number of weeks that screening tool has been introduced in schools all across the province. We had approximately 1,200 students, which is approximately 88% of the total five-year-old population, coming in. The feedback has been very positive. Those screening tools will be provided to parents, to schools, to the department and to the boards across the province as we look at strategies and interventions to provide ample opportunities to provide the appropriate interventions for our five-year-olds coming into the school system, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Supplementary question to the same minister.

Is there an opportunity for children who missed out on this evaluation to be assessed before September?

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

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

A great part of the success is that it provided an opportunity for the parents of the five-year-olds coming in to engage with the school administrators and teachers in the public school system. A positive first step as we welcome our new parents into schools all across the province.

There's approximately about 195 students that were identified that weren't able to participate in the assessments. We're working with schools all across the province to make sure that every child has an opportunity to have their assessments done so we can have the information ready and prepared for their new kindergarten teachers as we transition in September. So we'll look forward to hopefully providing a number of days in June, and we'll be working closely with the parents who haven't been able to participate, and the school administrators, to finalize that assessment.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Build PEI signs (further)

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you. A question to the Premier, Madam Speaker.

Will you find the exact cost of these signs and table it in the House?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: I'm sure I can get one of our departments to figure that out.

It's important that we make sure that Islanders know that we are, as a government, investing in our infrastructure in this province, the same that the federal does. I think you see lot of the signs around the province are both the provincial and the federal government, and we're very happy to work collaboratively with the federal government on a lot of these projects to make sure that our One Island Community, that their infrastructure needs are met.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Mr. Premier, during a recession, do you think this is the best way to be spending your money, putting up signs all over the province?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Madam Speaker, I guess we could not be doing these infrastructure programs across the province.

We could not be doing what we're doing now out at the QEH. Perhaps it was a bad idea, I'm not sure, to put the Department of Fisheries and Oceans down in the beautiful community of Montague. Perhaps it was a bad idea to build a brand new Montague high school. If the hon. member is against those ideas, perhaps he should just stand up and tell the House.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Government at Work website

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, the Premier and the Liberal government, they didn't stop here.

It seems like awhile ago they purchased the web site entitled Government at Work, which outlines in a very partisan way the government's so-called accomplishments.

I know the site didn't take a lot of space because the government doesn't have many accomplishments to put on it. But it cost to design and operate this Liberal propaganda tool.

Premier, how much has your government spent on this Government at Work website?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'll get one of my ministers to get that information for you when they come back with estimates. But when it comes to announcing government's accomplishments, we think it's very important that Islanders know that before we were in power we promised a Family Residency Program, and guess what? We have one now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Ghiz: We promised an Accelerated Nursing Program, and we did it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Ghiz: We promised to reduce down the gas taxes in this province by 4.4 cents a litre, and we did it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Ghiz: We promised to freeze residential property assessments for three years. In fact, we didn't do that, we did it for four years, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Ghiz: We made a lot of commitments to the people of Prince Edward Island, and I think it's very important that we continue on delivering on those commitments and that's what our government will continue to do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the Premier: Can you tell us what staff member of the Liberal Party of PEI designed

your web page?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Again, I'm sure that it was one of our great IT people in the Province of Prince Edward Island that we probably got to do that.

But again, we promised the colorectal cancer screening program, we delivered on that. We promised the Tyne Valley Health Centre, we delivered on that. We promised the Palliative Home Care Drug Care program, we delivered on that. We promised expansions to the ER at the Prince County Hospital, we delivered on that. We promised coverage for blood glucose testing strips for insulin-dependent Islanders, we delivered on that. We promised free emergency ambulance service for seniors, we delivered on that.

Part of the reason why we need the website, Madam Speaker, is because I don't have enough time in this House to list through them all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Ads in time of recession

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's another waste of taxpayers' dollars putting that on. If you look at the newspaper you'll see his advertisement continuously, One Island Community, One Island Future. They always have a picture of the Premier or one of the Cabinet ministers on there. Do you feel this is the best way of wasting taxpayers dollars putting these ads in the paper in a time of recession?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

We believe as a government in stimulating the economy. That's why I'm very happy to point out that a lot of independent economists in the country cited our infrastructure announcements in this province for giving us the ability to avoid a recession.

So in fact, everything that the former minister, the Member from Montague-Kilmuir, is talking about has enabled us to be the only province in Canada, in fact, not to fall into recession.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's always good - and this Premier has the same history, saying one thing and then doing another. I have a bill in my hand, Bill No. 101, *Government Advertisement Standards Act*. This was a bill that was introduced to this House by the Premier. It says the Hon. Robert Ghiz on it, the bill. So it was the Premier that brought this in and he was the Leader of the Opposition at that time. He said that he wanted this stuff taken out.

Premier, why have you done a 180% flip on this issue? You're the one that stood in this House and fought and argued that this is what should be done and now you turn around and you're doing it five times worse than it was ever done before. Explain, Premier.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Obviously, the member thinks that I only went half way. I can let him know I went the full way in making sure that we let Islanders know exactly the great investments that our government's making.

That has totally different comparisons that he's making. We're making announcements in this province to make sure that we move our province forward.

I want to quote from the Conference Board of Canada, from the provincial outlook, executive summary, winter 2010: Perhaps the greatest boon to the Prince Edward Island economy last year was the steady stream of government funds directed to the refurbishment and construction of public infrastructure.

Why do we have to make those announcements? Because there was 11 years of neglect in this province. The reason why the hon. member sees so much construction going on in the province, sees so many signs in the province, is because we want to make sure that Prince Edward Island, that the public infrastructure, is up to speed in this province, unlike the neglect of the former government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Premier, will you ensure that future government advertising does not include the name, the voice or image of a member of the Executive Council as member of the Legislative Assembly on your ads and on your posters? Will you assure that that doesn't happen?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I've seen a lot of the signs across the province. If my picture's on one I wish the hon. member would let me know where that is, and if it's paid for by the government we'll take it down. But I'm pretty sure there is none.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, every ad in the paper seems to have that picture there.

Premier, will you put a notice on each ad that states that the advertising is paid by the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Obviously, Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows full well here.

He's trying to compare apples and oranges. If there are government announcements, the same as I see from the hon. members from Montague-Kilmuir or Georgetown-St. Peters, sometimes they put advertisements in the paper, whether or not it's congratulating a local service club or congratulating a sports team that's done well. We follow the same guidelines that they do. In fact, the only time we put out an ad that went out in all the *Guardians* last year was paid for by the Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) to the Premier. Premier, would you make that a notice that at least be 20% size of the ad who is being paid for, like you suggested in your bill?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Again, if we're doing anything that is untowards, we will look at that. That's why when we put out a pamphlet last year we made sure that on that beautiful pamphlet that listed a lot of great things - I wish I had it on me now. If anybody has it, dig it up for me because it was a great ad, and we made sure that it was identified that it was paid for by the Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On your radio advertisements and t.v. ads, Premier, will you ensure that it clearly states, right at the first of the ad, that these ads are being paid for by the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'm pretty sure the only television ads that I really see on there have to do with transportation and public works and the hon. minister is not on those ads.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Premier, it seems to me that you made a lot of noise when you introduced this bill and these are all items that are in your bill to make sure you do it, and you're doing none of them, Premier.

You're the Premier of this province. You wanted this bill put in, obviously, or you

wouldn't have brought it to the House. You can bring this in. Will we be seeing you table this bill in the Legislature this year?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'll have to take a look at the bill. But we're too busy in this province rebuilding the public infrastructure that was neglected for an 11-year period.

But I can assure the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir that our government is very conscientious when it comes to advertising in the province. We know that the local media likes it when we advertise because obviously it's revenue for themselves. But we also make sure that our advertisements - that I believe there are provisions when they go on CBC television to make sure that the minister or Premier is not identified unless it's a government initiative. Certain things that do apply. But when it comes to public service announcements, I know that I see when it comes to winter tires all the time, you don't see the minister of transportation on there, you see a public service announcement, and we do follow all the guidelines.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, final question.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We notice that in the website there is all this propaganda advertising. You'd think that we're in an election campaign at the present time. Premier, is the Liberal Party so strapped for cash that you have to use the taxpayers' dollars to advertise your government and what you're doing rather than putting it through the proper channels? Why are you using this form of advertising as propaganda for an election and using

taxpayers' dollars when it should be paid for by the Liberal government?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I can assure the hon. member that we started the election campaign on May 28th, 2007 to make sure that we'd be ready for the next general election. Any time that we do do partisan advertising we make sure that it is paid for by the Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island, and that's exactly what we did last year with our beautiful brochures.

I don't have one on me now because they were in such hot demand across Prince Edward Island that people wanted them to be able to look at all the great things that the government's doing. But that was paid for by the Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

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

I'll just give you a moment, minister, and go to the hon. Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour for recognition of guests.

Ms. Sherry: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd just like to recognize Mr. Dave Morgan, who's come into the gallery here today, who has the great job of looking after the beautiful Credit Union Place in Summerside. I'd like to welcome him.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Shad Valley enrichment program

Mr. Campbell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a great pleasure to announce that 12 Island students will be taking part in the Shad Valley enrichment program this summer.

The Shad Valley program will host these students at one of 10 university campuses across the country. They will take part in hands-on workshops and group projects that encourage them to become innovative leaders in science, technology and entrepreneurship.

The province is partnering with the Shad Valley program and has committed funding for the next three years. With this funding Shad Valley will award the Premier's innovation scholarships, worth \$1,000, to each PEI participant, as well as giving out other awards and bursaries.

After the four-week enrichment programs, students are encouraged to seek an internship with a company related to their area of interest.

This program is a unique opportunity for students to learn about innovative leadership. The students who have been selected have excelled in their studies and have shown a range of talents outside of the classroom. By considering their career choices early and finding internships, these Island students are making great steps towards developing the skills they need for success in today's global knowledge-based economy. They show great promise to become tomorrow's community leaders.

By connecting with youth from across the

nation, they will be able to exchange ideas and learn about the active roles that youth from across the country are taking in their communities.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the students from across the Island who are taking part in the program. They are Morgan Roggeveen, Julian Gurnell, Andrew Reeves, Brianna Silliker, Brooke Currie, Danielle Peters, Chris Thompson, Dalton MacKenzie, Ellen Murphy, Emma Meanor, Megan McCardle and Michael Chen. I wish these students all the best as they take on this exciting opportunity.

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: Can I have your indulgence to acknowledge (Indistinct)?

I'd just like to welcome some visitors to the gallery. I see Robert Wood in the gallery, a former constituent of Charlottetown-Parkdale. I know Robert and his family over the years. We're of the same vintage and played a lot of ball hockey on Dennis Crescent. I still remember placing - Robert was younger so we always made him go in net. I'd like to welcome Robert.

I see Katy Baker in the gallery today, as well. Welcome, Katy. A special welcome to Bill Whelan who's in the gallery, who's the past-president of the Home and School association. Acknowledge Bill for his leadership and commitment. He certainly raised the bar on the profile for the Home and School association in the province. Thank him for his commitment for doing that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Science Fair winners

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my congratulations to the five Island students who will be representing PEI at the Canada-wide science fair in Peterborough, Ontario, this weekend.

We have with us today those five students who will present their projects on Saturday: Ashley MacLean, of Westisle Composite High, will be representing PEI this weekend with her project - PEI Potatoes: Sweet!; Emily Pass, of Stonepark Intermediate, and her project - The Acid Test; Arielle Van Iderstine, of Stonepark Intermediate, with her project - Seeing Sound; Arielle also won the Lieutenant Governor's Award with her innovative project; Sam Vail, of Immanuel Christian, with his project on wind power; and Samantha Lawther, of François-Buote: *La température et la hauteur de balles de squash* (The effect of temperature on the bounce of squash balls).

I had the opportunity to visit the provincial science fair this year and I was extremely impressed with the talent I saw there. Science fairs are an opportunity for curious students who like to experiment and invent to display their skills and to have their talent recognized.

The provincial science fair would not be possible without the great collaboration between UPEI faculty, staff, the Island's education system and wonderful volunteers.

We're lucky to have in the gallery with us today: Dr. Bill Whelan, chair; Dr. Barry Linkletter; Dr. Andrew Trivett; Lisa Steele; Whitney Kelly-Clark; Chris Vessey; Dr. Reina Lamothe; and Dr. John Burka of UPEI, as well as educators and volunteers Paul Stewart, Lise Deveau and Janice Murphy.

School district provincial science fairs are excellent learning opportunities that encourage students to continue learning and enjoying science. I would like to, once again, congratulate all participants in this year's fair and best of luck to Ashley, Emily, Arielle, Sam and Samantha as you represent PEI proudly at the Canada-wide science fair in Peterborough this weekend.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Go! PEI

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is an exciting day for Prince Edward Island. Today we are launching a new active living and healthy eating campaign.

Over the past months our department, in partnership with Recreation PEI and many community groups who are with us today, have been working diligently to create a made-in-PEI campaign to inspire Islanders. Today, I am proud to officially launch Go! PEI. We want to encourage and motivate Islanders of all ages and lifestyles to go for it.

Go for a walk. Go for a bike ride. Go to the farmer's market. Take ownership of your personal wellness and believe you have the power to make it better.

This past year at the Olympics thousands of Canadians joined in one voice cheering: Go, Canada, go. At the Canada Games, we heard cheering for Team PEI from the stands: Go PEI. Today, we are cheering for our entire One Island Community, our province. Every Islander, young and young at heart, go PEI.

Go! PEI is one of the government's integrated approaches to chronic illness prevention and management. The prevalence of chronic illness is increasing as our population ages. Go! PEI is designed to be a support system to all Islanders to help create healthier lifestyles and decrease the risk of chronic illness.

This campaign will demonstrate simple ways for Islanders to adopt healthier lifestyles through physical activities and healthy eating. The first step is a pledge. We want Islanders to commit to taking concerted steps that will improve their state of wellness.

With me today I have a copy of that pledge, and I would like to read the opening lines of the pledge. It says:

Good for us all. Go! PEI healthy living pledge. Join other Islanders and add more physical activity each day and make healthy food choices to improve your health.

Today, I urge everyone in this House, including myself, and every Islander to take the charge and sign the pledge and to get involved in this great campaign.

To help reach our personal goals and fulfill pledge, Go! PEI offers a wide range of resources and support systems. We have an interactive website with a full toolkit of resources. We are providing financial resources to 15 local level partners to carry out programs in their own communities.

Programs such as Learn to Run, community cycling initiatives, healthy eating activities, walking or biking programs, buying local foods, cooking classes, veggie box programs, our go 101 course, our community gardens and many others.

Our province-wide initiatives will include sneaker Fridays for the month of June,

healthy eating week in October, and Winteractive Week in January.

Go! PEI starts at the grassroots level. That is why it is different from previous campaigns. It will provide local level programming to all Islanders.

With the indulgence of the House, I'd like to recognize the 15 local level partners who will be carrying out this program, many of whom are in the gallery today: The West Prince Sports Council, Evangeline Recreation Commission, the City of Summerside, the community of Borden-Carleton, the Kensington Area Recreation Association, South Shore Actiplex, Gulf Shore Health Centre, town of Cornwall, the City of Charlottetown, the town of Stratford, the community of Grand Tracadie, the community of Morell, the community of Murray Harbour, the town of Montague and the Eastern Kings Sports Council.

I think that's wonderful, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: All signing on to be partners, Madam Speaker.

On June 4th, each of these 15 local partners will hold local kickoff events for Go! PEI in their own communities. On June 4th we hope that thousands of Islanders will get involved at the community level, come together with neighbours, friends and families to kickoff Go! PEI and make a commitment of change in their lives.

We have also developed partnerships with the provincial level such as the Healthy Eating Alliance, Cycling PEI, Island Trails and the PEI RoadRunners to provide support and assistance to our communities.

Go! PEI is something all Islanders can get involved in. It was created for and by

Islanders and focuses on using the resources we have. Supporting local producers; buying local products, fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood; getting outside; walking on the Confederation Trail or running on the beach; and using the local infrastructure throughout our One Island Community.

We have all the resources right here on Prince Edward Island to live a better life and make change. Go! PEI is all about feeling stronger and living longer. We are supporting Islanders, encouraging them to make a change for the better.

In close, I invite all members of this House to join me downstairs in the lecture theatre for a full launch of this initiative at 3:30. I also encourage you to sign the healthy living pledge and take that first step to a healthier you.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs for recognition of guests.

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

I just wanted to rise in the House today and welcome and point out the number of folks that the Minister of Health and Wellness has just said, but of course, I'd like to recognize a couple in particular.

Robert Wood, that the hon. minister of education took a lot of shots at in his early days, is now in Kensington, and giving his great talents to our town for the Kensington Area Recreation Association. He's ably assisted by Linda Crozier who doesn't mind wearing those red T-shirts one little bit. So we would like to welcome them to the gallery today, and thank you for your indulgence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

PC3 Funding Announcement Maritime Radio Communications Initiative

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, yesterday I had the opportunity to join federal finance minister Jim Flaherty, and representatives from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, for an important funding announcement.

Through P3 Canada Inc., the federal government is investing \$50 million dollars to support the implementation of the Maritime Radio Communications Initiative. The goal of this project is to implement a communications tool that will be a valuable asset to professionals in our provinces who respond to daily emergencies and disaster situations.

A common and shared mobile radio system will provide the optimum solution for Prince Edward Island's need to replace the aging and outdated Provincial Integrated Communications (PIC) system which is currently in use by many of our emergency providers and the provincial public service.

We're also currently reviewing opportunities to enhance the current 911 system on PEI, and the implementation of an interoperable radio system will enhance the system by enabling improved coordination of first responder agencies, particularly around complex multi-agency incidents.

The funding arrangement announced yesterday is a key component of a precedent-setting initiative. We look forward to working with the governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and other partners on agreements relating to the capital and operating costs of the system.

I am pleased that Prince Edward Island is participating as an equal partner in this procurement partnership with the federal and provincial governments, and with agencies including police, fire and EMS. I look forward to bringing you more exciting announcements as this project progresses.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Reports by Committees

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (II)

Speaker: Before I go to Introduction of Government Bills, I'll go to the Member from O'Leary-Inverness for recognition of guests.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I welcome some of the people to the gallery, but in particular, I want to welcome Krista Ellis from my riding of O'Leary-Inverness. Krista is obviously involved a bit with the Go PEI! concept, but she is an organizer with the West Prince Sports Council. She does a great job. So if I can believe anything in this Go PEI! concept, she'll make a great success and make O'Leary-Inverness more active and more healthy than it's ever been before. Welcome, Krista.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park for recognition of guests.

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to a point of privilege.

I'd like to recognize - I see Kim Meunier is in the gallery today. Kim is the chair of the Grand Tracadie Community Council. She does great work. She is certainly an asset to the community of Grand Tracadie.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Introduction of Government Bills

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

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Child Care Facilities Act (No. 2)*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Amend the Child Care Facilities Act (No. 2)*, Bill No.47, read a first time.

Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. D. Currie: Just to give the House just a brief update. We're just changing the word 'shall' to 'may' to allow the department to monitor the numbers and types of licences that are issued to assist with the planning of the early child action plan. Housekeeping item.

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that the 6th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 6, *Highway Traffic (Excessive Speed, Stunt and Racing) Amendment Act*, Bill No. 43, 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 Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Highway Traffic (Excessive Speed, Stunt and Racing) Amendment Act*, Bill No. 43, 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 Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I call on the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (McIsaac): The House is now in a

Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Highway Traffic (Excessive Speed, Stunt and Racing) Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: Could I have my director on the floor please?

Chair: Is that agreed?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Chair: Okay.

Question -

Mr. MacKinley: Just one second. Just one second. Not till he sits down. Give him time to sit down.

I want to make an amendment here - remove the provision to the *Highway Traffic (Excessive Speed, Stunt and Racing) Amendment Act*, Bill 43, that provides for the minimum and maximum offences for racing a bicycle on a highway. Also, section seven of the bill is renumbered as section six.

Now, do I read this now?

An Hon. Member: Yes, then you read the next one.

Mr. MacKinley: The next one is: amend and remove the provisions of the *Highway Traffic (Excessive Speed, Stunt and Racing) Amendment Act* -

Chair: Just a second.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah. One at a time.

Chair: Seconder?

Mr. MacKinley: We don't need a seconder.

Chair: Okay. Move to the section.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Chair: No, no. I didn't think you needed a seconder.

Mr. MacKinley: No.

Chair: What section is it in?

Mr. MacKinley: It's in here.

Chair: Do you want to do these before we go through the thing?

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah. I want to get through this. Yeah, before we go through it.

Mr. Bagnall: What are you amending on that first one, minister? You moved an amendment. Where and what (Indistinct)?

Mr. MacKinley: Just a minute, just be quiet for a second. We're taking out the provision for the bicycles. Remove the provision of the *Highway Traffic (Excessive Speed, Stunt and Racing) Amendment Act, 43* -

Mr. Bagnall: Minister -

Mr. MacKinley: - to provide for a minimum and maximum offence for racing of bicycles on highways.

An Hon. Member: What section is that in?

Mr. MacKinley: Section seven.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister -

Mr. MacKinley: I have a copy of the amendment here. Give me a copy of the amendment.

Mr. Bagnall: Is that the section where you

told them that -

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: - told the media out in the hall that you put that in (Indistinct)?

Mr. MacKinley: You can have your chances when I get these bills - where's his copy of this bill? I've got to give him a copy.

An Hon. Member: Here's the bill here.

Mr. MacKinley: No, but I've got to give him a copy.

Chair: The amendments, can we deal with them as we get to the section? We'll start at number one. When you have an amendment we'll go to that.

Mr. MacKinley: All right. Just one now.

Mr. M. Currie: Bring some sanity here.

An Hon. Member: I have just two copies.

Mr. MacKinley: Well, I need -

Chair: There are no amendments in number one, right? We're going to read number one?

Did you have a question first, hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir?

Mr. Bagnall: I'm talking about his amendment there. Minister, is that the one where you said, after you tabled the bill, that you put that clause in there so to see if the media were keeping alert, and that you were going to make an amendment to take it out, because you just wanted to check and see if the media were paying attention?

Mr. MacKinley: Could you make me three

copies of that?

Chair: We're going to deal with the amendments. When we get to the (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: We're going to start first and then we go down to amendments.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Mr. Chair, he already read the amendment.

Chair: I know.

Mr. MacKinley: No, they want to start. They want to start at the first.

Chair: Yeah, we're going to start at the -

Mr. MacKinley: We're going to start at the first.

Mr. Bagnall: We don't need the bill read clause by clause.

Mr. MacKinley: Well, they want it read.

Mr. Bagnall: We just want a couple answers to questions.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. MacKinley: Read it. Start it.

Chair: I ask -

Mr. MacKinley: They said they wanted it read by clause -

Chair: Just a second, just a second.

I asked you if you wanted it clause by clause.

Mr. MacKinley: He said yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Then I said to you, not necessarily. We don't need it read. What we want to know is that amendment that he's bringing forth, first of all, is that, minister, the amendment that when you said out in the hall you just put that in to see if the media were paying attention in the bill and that you were going to bring in an amendment to take it off (Indistinct)?

Mr. MacKinley: I want to show the media and the general public what kind of shape some of those highway regulations are and how we (Indistinct) and some of them are foolish regulations the city has taken out.

That's a prime example. I had an analysis and a review done of the PEI traffic act and I want to bring it to a point to show people that, when you get an analysis done of the *Highway Traffic Act*, you guys had 10 or 12 years to look after it. The RCMP stated they spend more time sometimes trying to figure out what to charge somebody under and consulting back and forth (Indistinct) actually catching the person.

That's what it's there for. That's my answer and that's what it's there for. Just to show some of you previous government people like yourself that you did nothing for 10 years. I'm doing something and that's what we're doing.

So I put that in. It's a (Indistinct) part of the act, but in this act that we want to take out it's already there now, correct? It's there now, and the only way you can get it out of the *Highway Traffic Act*, all these bills got to come to the floor, amendments, and delete it, is that correct?

John MacDonald Director: That's correct.

Mr. MacKinley: That's correct. So I'm just

deleting one of the amendments that we don't need there. Once we get to it - I sent for copies of it here.

Chair: Do you have a further question, the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes I do. First of all, minister, you put it in there. You're the one that put this - this is an amended bill, you're the one that put the amendment in the bill to begin with, first of all.

The second thing is you said you put it in and you told everybody out in the hall and the media that: I put that clause in there because I wanted to see if the media were paying attention.

Mr. MacKinley: And you fellows.

Mr. Bagnall: But if that's the case, minister, why are you -

Mr. M. Currie: Wasting the taxpayers' money.

Mr. MacKinley: No, it's not wasting taxpayers' money.

Mr. Bagnall: - wasting Shawn Flynn, who is a real good legislator in this province who works hard getting legislation written, why are you playing jokes with that civil servant here so you can make fun of people and see if the media are paying attention?

If that's what you call being a good minister, I think you got some problems.

Mr. MacKinley: (Indistinct) finish up.

Chair: (Indistinct) okay. Minister?

Mr. MacKinley: Is this not already there in the highway act? Could you explain that?

John MacDonald Director: It's already -

Mr. MacKinley: It's already there.

John MacDonald Director: - in the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Mr. MacKinley: If you had read the highway act and did a little research on this bill you'd know that and you wouldn't look like this on t.v., like your prime time t.v. time, and you shouldn't be looking like this. A member that's been here 14 years or whatever.

I'll let my director explain. You got to put it in here to delete it or we would have had to delete it somewhere else. Is that correct?

Mr. Bagnall: No problem with that, minister. But you were the gentleman that was out in the hall telling everybody that the only reason that that clause was in the bill is because you wanted to see if the media were paying attention.

Mr. MacKinley: Have you got a tape?

Mr. Bagnall: You wanted to see if they were - and that you had an amendment already to bring in because you just wanted to see if they were paying attention. I think that's a travesty to this House and I think it's a travesty to Shawn Flynn to put him through a situation like that, minister. If that's what you think is funny, that's what you think is being sharp in this House, then you're dead wrong.

We'll carry the bill.

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: No, just wait now.

Mr. Bagnall: We carried it. It's carried.

Mr. MacKinley: Now we got to get the amendment though. You can't carry the bill without the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: You can't carry the bill without the amendment we have.

Mr. Bagnall: It's been carried.

Mr. MacKinley: But then you leave it in, if you carry it.

Mr. Bagnall: The bill is carried?

Chair: (Indistinct) carried.

Mr. MacKinley: No.

John MacDonald Director: The minister needs to introduce the motion (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: I got a motion.

Chair: Do you have an amendment for the bill?

Mr. MacKinley: I have it, but it's not back yet. Where are they? Why don't you get me a copy and I'll take it back?

Mr. Bagnall: We already carried the bill.

Mr. MacKinley: But if you want to explain it - while we're waiting, could you just explain it - would the director explain it -

An Hon. Member: Carry it as amended.

Chair: Carry as amended?

Shall the amendment carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: Then we got the number two amendment. We got to make a number two amendment to it. But we don't have the number two amendment. I got to read it when it comes back here.

Mr. Bagnall: So who are you trying to trick this time?

Mr. MacKinley: There is a number two amendment. While we're waiting for the amendment to come back to the floor -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: Listen, could I get my director John MacDonald to explain out how a bill -

Mr. Bagnall: Somebody should.

Mr. MacKinley: - has got to deleted and in and out? John, would you speak?

Chair: Do you want to clarify that?

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, clarify it for him.

John MacDonald Director: I'll make an attempt.

Mr. Bagnall: We're on the second amendment.

Chair: Yes, we're on the second amendment.

John MacDonald Director: What we have is - we had a bill that was drafted to deal with amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Mr. Bagnall: Is this the amendment you're talking about?

John MacDonald Director: That's correct, yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: What's the amendment?

Mr. MacKinley: Here is the amendment.

Chair: Just wait, John's talking.

John MacDonald Director: So the bill was drafted, and then it was decided that there were some things in the bill that needed to be changed. The minister said that he'd deal with it on the floor.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, so what's the amendment?

John MacDonald Director: So really what the amendment is, there is a reference in the *Highway Traffic Act* to racing and bicycles -

Mr. Bagnall: No, we've already carried that one. We're looking for the second amendment.

John MacDonald Director: Right, so then there was a renumbering that had to go on in the bill.

An Hon. Member: A renumbering.

John MacDonald Director: A renumbering of the bill. That's correct.

Mr. Bagnall: If it's just the renumbering we'll carry it.

Chair: Shall the second amendment carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: Nobody read the second amendment.

John MacDonald Director: The renumbering in the first bill -

Mr. MacKinley: Renumbering in the first bill, and here is the amendment in the second.

Mr. Bagnall: What bill is next?

Mr. MacKinley: The amendment removes (Indistinct) *Highway Traffic Act*, stunt driving, racing, excessive speed and then the

Bill No. 43, that deals with bicycle racing on highways. Also section 4 and 5 of the bill are (Indistinct) as section 3 and 4 respectively.

Now here's a copy for the members that are here. Could you pass that over to the gentleman?

Could you clarify it? He'll clarify it.

Mr. Bagnall: We've carried them, we're okay with them.

Mr. MacKinley: You don't need it clarified?

Mr. Bagnall: No.

Mr. MacKinley: All right. It's all done.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: It's just a shame that you're picking on Shawn Flynn. You're making a fool of him by bringing in legislation like that. (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: You don't get the point. You got to bring it in to get rid of it.

I move the title.

Chair: *Highway Traffic (Excessive Speed, Stunt and Racing) Amendment Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacKinley: 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. MacKinley: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair report the bill agreed to with 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 *Highway Traffic (Excessive Speed, Stunt and Racing) Amendment Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. minister of education and advanced learning, that we move into the estimates.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Gallant: We're going to go into estimates first.

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

Mr. D. Currie: Order No. 2 now be read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

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

Mr. D. Currie: I move the House resolve itself -

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

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'd ask the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford to chair the estimates.

Mr. LeClair: Mr. Chair, can I bring on my deputy?

An Hon. Member: Minister, do you want to bring your deputy on?

Mr. LeClair: Yes, sir. Certainly.

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

We're beginning at the top of page 86.

Are you ready?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. LeClair: There we go. Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Richard, if we just follow along on this, like your purchased services, professional contracts, services and grants, it'll go right along as a department as set up here all the way through? You have it in order, do you?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: It is

ordered in the left column.

Chair: Okay? Do you have everything you need?

Mr. Bagnall: Read the first section anyway, and then we'll start from there.

Chair: Are you ready?

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Chair: Okay.

Department Management.

Administration. "Appropriations provided for the operation of the Minister's and the Deputy Minister's offices for various departmental administrative functions, strategic policy and program development and coordination of research activities."

Administration: 32,800. Equipment: Nil. Materials, Supplies and Services: 7,000. Professional and Contract Services: 10,000. Salaries: 384,700. Travel and Training: 42,000. Grants: 130,700. Total Administration: 607,200.

Any questions on that?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes. Minister, just a couple of things while I think of it, if you don't mind. It's probably not related to this, but it will probably make things go a little smoother as we go along. I just want to ask a few questions.

Minister, oyster fishermen, for instance, right now are having it hard enough, as we know. But what's happening? My concern is when they weren't fishing ice a lot of them were doing quahogs. There were a lot of fishermen going out and fishing quahogs. They were getting, a year or so ago, or two years, about 25 cents a pound. Now that's gone down to, I think, what I'm hearing, about 12 to 13 cents a pound that they're

getting for that. It's making it almost impossible for these guys to make a stamp, let alone - is there anything that can be done to help this industry? I know we've put a lot of money into the other fishing industry, and I congratulate you for that. We needed it. They need it.

But this is a group that's kind of sliding through the cracks. I don't think anybody's looking at them. There are quite a number of these fishermen out there. Is there a way that there could be maybe a partial subsidy at 5 cents a pound, or there could be something done for these particular producers?

Mr. LeClair: The concern they have, and I had a call from -

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon? I didn't hear, that's all.

Mr. LeClair: The concern they have - this morning I had a call actually from an oyster fisherman on my way down to Charlottetown. One of his main concerns was that the price is so low the amount of product that they have to bring in is so big now that they're probably not going to get enough to get their EI. So it's somewhere in the vicinity around \$17,000 worth they have to land or something to be eligible for the biggest - or for EI. So that's one of their biggest concerns and it has to do definitely with the price, because the price is so low.

Mr. Bagnall: It's dropped over 50%.

Mr. LeClair: Yes, that's an issue that's maybe have something, some special formula in there for that fishery, that they don't have to bring in so much product in order to get the big amount for EI.. Maybe lower that.

Other than that, the only thing we can work on is trying to get the price upwards, which we have been doing, through promotion and

things like that, but -

Mr. Bagnall: Well, minister -

Mr. LeClair: - work with the buyers probably, to try and move their price up.

Mr. Bagnall: We had a program for Irish moss which allowed - you put X number of dollars into Irish moss fishermen, and we bought product from the - and we allowed, so they would get enough money so they could get their stamps. This is the same type of thing. Why couldn't we do this for the quahogs? We did it for the Irish moss people.

Mr. LeClair: We didn't prop up the price for Irish moss -

Mr. Bagnall: We bought it, though, did we not?

Mr. LeClair: - or for fusilaria. Yes, we did, but there was no industry, there was absolutely nowhere to sell. So the idea there was that these people were out, absolutely couldn't get anything, and it was a different situation. Like, all the fishery, it's hard to subsidize the fishery (Indistinct) it comes in, and -

Mr. Bagnall: I understand that, but you may as well say these guys are getting nothing, too, because they're down to 12 cents a pound. It's probably one of the hardest fisheries where you have to work because you're on your knees and you're clawing and scratching trying to get enough of these quahogs so that they can make a living, and even if they go out and they have a great day, they still haven't made enough to - I mean, they can't make enough to even make a day's pay let alone a living. What stamps they would get would be so minimal off of this that it's a crisis as far as that part of the fishery is concerned.

Have you looked at doing anything on their behalf?

Mr. LeClair: Yes. It's not only the quahog industry, it's the oyster industry, too. I mean, we do put quite a bit of money into enhancement and things in the oyster area, but as far as dictating what price they can pay, we're in the same issue there as we are with the lobster fishery. It's hard to dictate a price or subsidize a price when the market won't pay it. But yes, we discuss that all the time, but it's hard to get to -

Mr. Bagnall: I know, and I know you're up against - but isn't there - I mean, we give grants for all these different things. Why couldn't we put some grant money into the quahog and help these guys a little bit rather than - you know, some of these guys have been doing it for years, and they're going to lose everything that they've got because they can't make a living.

Mr. LeClair: Yes, and for a while there was a lot of them that have gotten into the industry, there's a lot of licenses out there, probably a little over half of them are being used right now, and it fluctuates. For a while there weren't near as many into it. Now there's a lot more have gotten into it.

Mr. Bagnall: I think that's because of the oyster prices being down, too, and they're trying to supplement income by trying to make enough to get by on, you see. So they're grasping at straws trying to find other ways that they can stay afloat in the industry, and this was one way until the price completely went south on them.

Mr. LeClair: (Indistinct) on a lot of seafood, it's (Indistinct) on a lot, and to look at subsidizing one sector, you basically have to look right across the board and (Indistinct) -

Mr. Bagnall: We've kind of done

something with the Irish moss, though. I mean, it's not like you're setting a precedent. The Irish moss has been there where we've stepped in and helped. Did we help the Irish moss people last winter?

Mr. LeClair: Last summer we bought a bit of fusilaria.

Mr. Bagnall: So we've done that for the last four years, or five years.

Mr. LeClair: Three years. Three years.

Mr. Bagnall: I think they did it, did they not do it, when I was there, too?

Mr. LeClair: No.

Mr. Bagnall: That came on after?

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. That's still fine, I don't care, but it's a good program because these guys would not have been able to survive without it.

Mr. LeClair: Yes, and the issue is we still have no real uptake for Irish moss in the market right now, so the problem still exists. So, how long do you keep -

Mr. Bagnall: I was going to say: How long do you keep buying it, then?

Mr. LeClair: That's right.

Mr. Bagnall: So what value dollar -

Mr. LeClair: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: What dollar are you using in the Irish moss, Minister?

Mr. LeClair: What dollar?

Mr. Bagnall: How much are you putting

into that? Two hundred thousand, is it?

Mr. LeClair: No, last year it wasn't quite 100,000, about 96. Somewhere around there.

Mr. Bagnall: So you only have 10 people now applying for that?

Mr. LeClair: That's right. Yeah, I think there was 12 last year.

Mr. Bagnall: Twelve? Okay.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, we're watching every night on t.v., a disaster of magnitude that all of us are probably - can't even imagine what's happening in the Gulf of Mexico.

I'm just wondering what steps you're taking to bring, promote, deliver to Texas, Florida Panhandle area, all our shellfish? What type of marketing program have you put in place? Because if we don't do something, I think that people are going to brand everything that's covered - seafood covered with oil. We have to, maybe, go down there and say: Ours is pristine and ours is clean. It's the best lobster in the world. Go down and market it.

So I don't see anything in your document here of any expenditure to promote our clams, our mussels, our lobster in that area. Because this is something that's not going to stop and it's definitely going to have an impact on the consuming public down there that - when shrimp come out of the water or lobster comes out of the water, that oil has affected them and they don't want to eat it. But we have to go down, say: Sorry for your inconvenience, but you can buy ours.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. We do have a seafood marketing officer and we promote our

product down at the Boston seafood show.

Mr. M. Currie: Can you table what he's put together for that market down there?

Mr. LeClair: For this particular one right now? Well, no, we're not that far yet. I mean, but yes, we should be looking at that market, but I mean, since this oil spill happened and what's going in the gulf, it takes time to get something orchestrated and get down there. But it's a good idea.
(Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: I understand that, but they're even using the boats now to put oil on top, in their fish holes. So that's got to have a lasting impact. If you put diesel oil in the hull of a vessel it takes a long time to get it out of there. Especially with a heavy bunker oil like there. It's like waste oil, putting it inside of a bunker, their holds of the boat.

I think you should be first off the gate, minister. I hope you do, for the livelihood of our fishermen. I, for one, will definitely approve anything in your budget that's going to promote our products in the Gulf of Mexico and get our truckers to bring it down there, do a proper marketing program, and I'd like to see one done asap here.

Mr. LeClair: Good idea.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you. Don't be scared to spend the money. Spend money on signs
(Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, we're into the second week of our lobster season there again. Do you have a handle on the price as of now? Has it dropped this week?

Mr. LeClair: No, it hasn't dropped. It's

basically staying around the same as
(Indistinct) -

Mr. Bagnall: Which is?

Mr. LeClair: Two seventy-five up to 3.25 somewhere, and we've heard rumours that it went up to 3.50 for a short period there. But it's still between 2.75 and 3.25 for canners and as high as 3.50 for markets.

Mr. Bagnall: Have you been checking the other provinces, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick? How is the price handling, minister?

Mr. LeClair: Actually, in New Brunswick, we're doing as well or probably a little better than New Brunswick on the average, as far as price goes.

Mr. Bagnall: What are they selling for?

Mr. LeClair: They're about 2.75 and 3.25. Nova Scotia is in the range of three and three and a quarter, 2.75, it's all over the place. That range of 2.75 is usually pretty much the starting point everywhere.

Mr. Bagnall: Have we got a glut in the market right now?

Mr. LeClair: Do we have a glut? I don't think so. I'm not hearing anything on a glut. The product's coming in and we're able to handle it pretty good.

Mr. Bagnall: Everything's being handled to date?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Two windy days last week -

Mr. Bagnall: Helped?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Slowed

down the product coming and we haven't heard a report this morning, but -

Mr. Bagnall: Yesterday, catches were high, right?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. That's (Indistinct) right through. But they had those windy days, couple of windy days, and it slowed the product coming in. But the catches are still very good.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm wondering, minister, and I'm going to bring this back to you - I asked you questions a couple of weeks ago there about price fixing that your member from Belfast brought in to a standing committee, that he said there was price fixing going on and he had documentation to back it up to prove it. Did you meet with him after that?

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: Did he have the documentation to back it up?

Mr. LeClair: What he did - he did have documentation, an email I think it was, from 2004, 2005, somewhere in that area. But I mean if you're going to make allegations - and price fixing allegations -

Mr. M. Currie: Serious allegations.

Mr. LeClair: - it has to be made to the Competition Bureau in Canada. So I mean, it's a federal issue -

Mr. Bagnall: So has he made that to them?

Mr. LeClair: I'm not sure if he did or not.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: It was my understanding that was looked at by the federal competition bureau some time ago.

Mr. Bagnall: No, this was just recently that he had information based on last year.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: The particular information dates back from 2005 -

Mr. LeClair: The particular information (Indistinct) 2005 -

Mr. Bagnall: So he had no new information, then?

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

Mr. Sheridan: Are we talking about our hon. member from Belfast you're speaking of?

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Mr. Sheridan: It's nothing to do with price fixing.

Mr. Bagnall: That's what he said.

Mr. Sheridan: But it's not price fixing. He's talking about fairness of price between the jurisdiction of Nova Scotia or New Brunswick and the prices being paid over here. It's not price fixing. He's not accusing them of price fixing. He's saying that we should get the same price here as they pay in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Bagnall: I have to contradict you there. He did stand in the committee - that there was price fixing going on and he could prove it, and he had the documentation to prove that the processors in this province were price fixing. He was upset about it.

Mr. Sheridan: He has no documentation on price fixing. All he has is prices -

Mr. Bagnall: That's what he told us.

Mr. Sheridan: I know that's what he's telling you. But what he has is all the prices that were paid to Island fishers that took

their lobster over to Nova Scotia and landed them. So he said they got a higher price over there than they got over here. That's what he's talking about. He doesn't have any paperwork that says that the Island processors are getting together and price fixing.

Mr. Bagnall: That's what he accused them of at the -

Mr. Sheridan: He's accusing them because they're getting lesser price over here than they are in Nova Scotia, so they must be price fixing. But that's not anything that you would ever hold up in a competition for.

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

Mr. MacKinley: You were the minister there, the Member from Montague-Kilmuir. You were the minister of fisheries, I believe. Were you a minister of agriculture? Were you minister of fisheries?

Mr. Bagnall: This isn't question period. If you want a question, direct it to your own minister.

Mr. MacKinley: We want to have some of your knowledge.

Chair: Do you have a comment, minister?

Mr. MacKinley: I'm asking just a question.

Chair: Okay. I have a question from the hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

Mr. Campbell: Just wondering, minister, if you could update us on the number of buying licenses that have been issued in the province this year as opposed to last year?

Mr. LeClair: As opposed to last year. I didn't count them. I don't know how many

we had but there is - I think there's probably more buying licenses that I signed this year than I did last year.

Mr. Campbell: Yeah, I was kind of wondering that because I know that the wharves up in my end of the province, there seems to be - I know there are some new buyers present and there seems to be an overall higher number for sure.

Mr. LeClair: There's a lot of the same buyers but they're going to more wharves to buy. They're moving out more.

Mr. Campbell: In my experience in the fishery, when we saw that happen in the past it usually led to a higher return to fishers, which we're certainly hopeful of this year.

Mr. LeClair: It certainly shows that the interest is there to buy. The competition is out there so that should lead to a higher price.

Mr. Campbell: Any idea, Minister, how many peddler's licenses as opposed to last year?

Mr. LeClair: Around 40 or 41.

Mr. Campbell: I guess I just want to commend you for the move to peddler's licenses there last year. The fishermen certainly identified that as a need in the industry and I want to commend you and the department for the work to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: Comments by the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Mr. MacKinley: I just want to comment. The minister, what I'm hearing is, people in the fishing area over on the south shore are very happy with that loan program you put through, very happy.

Mr. LeClair: Great program, yeah.

Mr. MacKinley: Also, they're very happy that you got rid of the red tape for buyers to get licensed where the previous government put a lot of red tape and discouraged people from getting the buyer's license. The fishermen are saying in a bad situation, you're making things better than they would have been. So, if that's any good to you, I think you and your department deserve a lot of credit.

Mr. LeClair: Great initiatives.

Chair: Any further questions in this section?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department Management: 607, 200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Marine Fisheries and -

Mr. M. Currie: You have grants there. What were the grants?

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

Mr. M. Currie: Under Administration -

Mr. LeClair: Grants. That would be support funding for the aquaculture alliance, seafood processors, the PEIFA.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay. I see it here there.

Chair: Okay?

Okay.

Mr. M. Currie: The -

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

Mr. M. Currie: I see it farther ahead here.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. M. Currie: Go ahead. Carry.

Chair: Marine Fisheries and Seafood Services.

Marine Fisheries. "Appropriations provided for the provincial advocacy on behalf of the Prince Edward Island fishing industry, species research and assistance to address marine fishery constraints and opportunities." Administration: 4,400. Equipment: 300. Materials, Supplies and Services: 6,000. Professional and Contract Services: 24,100. Salaries: 440,800. Travel and Training: 27,800. Grants: 1,085,000. Total Marine Fisheries: 1,588,400.

Any questions on that section?

Mr. M. Currie: Is this where the low-interest loans are?

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

Mr. M. Currie: Minister?

Mr. LeClair: Is this what?

Mr. M. Currie: Is this where the low-interest loans program is? Is that what makes up your million dollars?

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Mr. M. Currie: You had a guy hired, John Saxton, was it?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. We did. We had a contract with him.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah. He does some marketing?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: Did you do any marketing, minister, in regards to other markets outside of - I know that they talk about Boston and Brussels, but are there any other markets that you went to?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. We were down in China and across Canada.

Mr. M. Currie: Did you go to other parts of the United States that we haven't touched before with brokers?

Mr. LeClair: We were in - just a couple weeks ago -

Mr. M. Currie: Las Vegas or anywhere like that?

Mr. LeClair: Brussels.

Mr. M. Currie: Brussels.

Premier Ghiz: The -

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: I'm just going to float this idea out this idea out there, if I can float an idea. I was reading in an article in the *USA Today*, when I was down in the US, about Steve Wynn now is - he owns MGM and all those things in Vegas. Sold them out. Built his own Wynn resort. They're charging him so much in taxes he's moving his worldwide headquarters now over to Macau, and they say that the majority of the revenues coming from casinos now are coming from China, and not from Las Vegas.

So in fact, the casinos over in China now are becoming larger and larger and are surpassing what's going on in Las Vegas. So if you ever going to get in to that casino buffet market, Macau is the spot to be. In fact, the governor of the - because in China

the governors are like the head business people, everybody has to go through them - the governor of Macau was actually the ambassador to Canada, and actually came here, and we gave him lobster at one point. So it was not a bad move.

But anyway, that's just pie in the sky stuff. Everybody can have pie in the sky ideas, but action is more important. It's easier said than done.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Carried.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Top of page 87.

Seafood Services. "Appropriations provided for services to fishermen and processors in the areas of fish inspection, fish quality, in-province seafood promotion, statistical coordination and analysis, training and maintenance of provincial shore facilities." Administration: 3,200. Equipment: 3,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 47,700. Professional and Contract Services: 5,500. Salaries: 262,500. Travel and Training: 46,900. Grants: 86,300. Total Seafood Services: 455,300.

Questions on that section?

Mr. M. Currie: Question, yeah.

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

Mr. M. Currie: I see where you spent 85,000 to do a lobster strategy project. Could you forward that information to our office, or do you have it with you?

Mr. LeClair: Eighty-five thousand.

Mr. M. Currie: Examining results. Issues around labour shortage improvements to automation and training area private sector.

Mr. LeClair: It's a number of funding projects that have been carried out. So what was it you were wanting?

Mr. M. Currie: You spent 85,000 to examine and resolve issues around labour shortages in the lobster industry. I'm just wondering who got that, and if you'd table the study to us or whatever. It's under grant. Lobster strategy funding, 85,000.

Mr. LeClair: Lobster strategy funding. I don't -

Mr. M. Currie: It's on the document you gave me, minister.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. I got it.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Mr. LeClair: Funding provided for partnering with seafood processor sector to examine, resolve issues - yeah, I guess we can bring back -

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: It's funding in the grant line to be able to carry out co-sponsor -

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: - a number of projects (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: We're at seafood services, the top. I'm asking for the study that they did, Jim, on the lobster.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, but do we have anything to bring back?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: It is a grant line that we can fund projects.

Mr. M. Currie: Can't hear you.

Mr. LeClair: It's a grant line that we fund with the members of the industry. So -

Mr. M. Currie: Whatever constitutes the 85,000, whatever studies you did, or whatever invoices, can you -

Mr. LeClair: We'd have to go back to each individual - I got the projects that -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: No, this is around labour shortages, improvements to automation and training.

Mr. LeClair: See, we put some into Fisheries Council of Canada, Lobster Council of Canada, seafood promotion 2009 -

Mr. M. Currie: Okay, that's fine. You forward us the information to accommodate the 85,000 and what was done.

The other question I have, minister, is -

Mr. LeClair: I would think - that should be in your grant contribution. You should have it all in what we gave you. I don't -

Mr. M. Currie: You gave me -

Mr. LeClair: Everything that's in there as grants is definitely - you have it.

Mr. M. Currie: I have 85,000 on that side.

Mr. LeClair: Eighty-five thousand.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. LeClair: Lobster (Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: On the left side of that paper, and it says for the lobster strategy

funding.

Mr. LeClair: That's the new budget. We didn't do any projects yet. That's the new budget, 85,000, we set aside for that.

Mr. M. Currie: So the stuff that's on the right is what you spent.

Mr. LeClair: What we spent. So it's not 85,000.

Mr. M. Currie: So it's 94,000 you spent.

Mr. LeClair: Exactly.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Mr. LeClair: That's the total.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay, question for you then. This is the year of culinary promotion from tourism and the government -

Mr. LeClair: Culinary Alliance, yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: Are you doing Out of the Sea and Over the Coals, are you doing more of a promotion this year on our Island campgrounds, our Island festivals, so on and so forth?

Mr. LeClair: We'll be involved in all of the festivals for sure, the same as we always were.

Mr. M. Currie: But it looks like you cut their budget.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: How, if this is the year of - you're going to promote culinary expertise and experience - why are you cutting the budget for Out of the Sea and Over the Coals?

Mr. LeClair: I didn't. We aren't cutting -

Mr. M. Currie: Slashing and cutting.

Mr. LeClair: No we're not. Actually, we've added the fisheries budget and the Culinary Alliance we'll add to that as well.

Mr. M. Currie: Can you show me what line, then?

Mr. LeClair: We'll be helping them. All of the departments will be putting money into the Culinary Alliance initiative.

Mr. M. Currie: Under materials, supplies and services, you dropped it from 57 to 47 - \$10,000 cut.

Mr. LeClair: Materials, supplies and services -

Mr. M. Currie: Somebody's got to look out for the primary producers in this province.

Mr. LeClair: Fifty-seven to 47? Okay. Let me look that one up. Overall, we've added over 400,000 to our budget, but this is one line here that we found a decrease. We had a decrease in certain areas, so we decreased our budget there by 10,000.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay, so you're telling me is that the seafood promotion that you guys do - your department across our festivals, campgrounds, or wherever - is going to be more pronounced and more -

Mr. LeClair: It will be, in partnership with the Culinary Alliance and -

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you.

Mr. Bagnall: So you're cutting at the students?

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: You're cutting out the student

part of that?

Mr. LeClair: No, not in the least.

Mr. Bagnall: So are they still going to be going around, minister?

Mr. LeClair: Yes, they are.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. No, that's good.

Mr. LeClair: Yes, they are. That's a great program. I wouldn't cut that one out.

Mr. Bagnall: No, no. That's great.

I'm looking at the low interest loans here. Is that 4.5% they're being charged on the low-interest loans?

Mr. LeClair: I think it's 4%.

Mr. Bagnall: Plus administration fees. So it's 0.5 administration fee, according to this.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: The loans are lent to the fishermen at 4%, and our department is responsible for the difference between 4% and the cost of borrowing, plus a half per cent administration.

Mr. Bagnall: So the fishermen -

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: So actually the lending agency would send us an invoice on administration. It's not the fishermen -

Mr. LeClair: The fishermen are getting it at 4%.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, they're getting at four. Okay, I just wanted to double check.

On the interest support for lobster rationalization there. Is that 100 bucks a (Indistinct)?

Mr. LeClair: (Indistinct) another section.

Mr. Bagnall: I missed that, I'm sorry.

Mr. LeClair: We passed that section awhile ago. That's why I can't find you, I guess.

Mr. Bagnall: I don't think so. It's in the grants here, 1.5 million dollar. That's marine seafood and -

Mr. LeClair: No, we're at Seafood Services.

Chair: Are you at the top of page 87?

Mr. Bagnall: No, okay. I want to go back to that section because there is some good stuff in this. I want to make sure.

Mr. LeClair: Marine Fisheries and Seafood Services.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah.

Mr. LeClair: And you're at the grants?

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, I'm at the grants. That \$150,000, that's what you're putting into it?

Mr. LeClair: That's the interest support for lobster rationalization. That's the \$3 million that we loaned them. We'll be paying the interest on that \$3 million. It's an interest-free loan.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, so you've given a loan of \$3 million to that. So how is that program - how are they doing on rationalization? Are they taking fishers right out of the water?

Mr. LeClair: They're gone, yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, they've taken how many out?

Mr. LeClair: There are 34 fleets gone.

Mr. Bagnall: Thirty-four fleets out of the water in that area.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: So what has the impact been this year now that they've taken them out?

Mr. LeClair: The impact last fall, we saw it when they took 24 out, now they won't fish that until this fall again. So we won't know what the 34 did. But it should be - by the indications of last fall it was really good.

Mr. Bagnall: Are the 34 from the spring fishery or fall fishery?

Mr. LeClair: It's fall fishery.

Mr. Bagnall: It's all fall fishery?

Mr. LeClair: It's all fall fishery, yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: The Future Fishers Program, explain that one to me. Thirty-thousand dollars doesn't seem to be a lot of money. What are we paying the \$30,000 for that program for future fishers? That won't even buy a motor.

Mr. LeClair: The Future Fishers Program, that's a three-year program. Based on the amount of applicants that came in, they get interest relief to \$3,000 a year depending on -

Mr. Bagnall: So you're going to help 10 fishermen, in other words, with this program a year?

Mr. LeClair: No, we can go as high as - as many fishermen that come in -

Mr. Bagnall: You only got 30,000 budget.

Mr. LeClair: No, that's what we spent.

Mr. Bagnall: Ten times three is 30,000.

Mr. LeClair: That's what we spent. I got 100,000 budgeted in the next year's budget.

Mr. Bagnall: Oh, okay.

Mr. LeClair: But we spent 30,000.

Mr. Bagnall: Last year?

Mr. LeClair: Yes. That's because of the uptake. But it'll grow.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Between 25 and 30 that were approved out of last fiscal year.

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Twenty-five or 26 applicants were approved, but they have to complete three training initiatives to get their \$3,000. So some only completed two.

Mr. Bagnall: What are they, though?

Mr. LeClair: There is a number of them here and they have to have - we require three of a certain list so they can - okay, we got MEDA1, Fishing Master 4 or SVOP. Small vessel operators for proficiency. Marine advanced first aid. They have to attend the PEIFA Annual Convention, attend an annual lobster science central workshop, the Lobster Advisory Committee meeting, workshops on lobster health and biology management, lobster health, Provincial Lobster Resource Monitoring Program, fisheries resource management overview.

Mr. Bagnall: So they just have to do three of all of these?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: There is nine components they have to do, they would do three a year. So there is nine that they do over the three-year life (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: And they can get 3,000 year for three years?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: So, 9,000 in total.

Mr. LeClair: And there is 1,000 in there, too, to help them get the training and things like that.

Mr. Bagnall: So every future guy that qualifies on here gets 10,000 over the three-year program -

Mr. LeClair: Yes, he could possibly get -

Mr. Bagnall: - if he meets the requirements?

Mr. LeClair: If he meets the requirements exactly.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Your government had made a lot of noise over the last few years that you were going to eliminate the so-called Ocean Choice agreement. Can you tell me how you're getting along with that?

Mr. LeClair: I don't know if we said we were ever going to eliminate it. I don't remember myself saying I was going to eliminate the Ocean Choice agreement.

Mr. M. Currie: I think your Premier did, though. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I'm sure I remember the Premier saying it. Are you in negotiations to -

Mr. LeClair: We're in negotiations all the time.

Mr. M. Currie: How are you getting along?

Mr. LeClair: Things are going pretty good.

Mr. M. Currie: You're speaking?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, we are speaking.

Mr. M. Currie: You're meeting?

Mr. LeClair: Yes, exactly, we're -

Mr. M. Currie: No cheques are changing hands?

Mr. LeClair: No, things are going along - we're still meeting with them and definitely talking all the time. If they're ever comes to a point where both sides can get together on something, the option will be there. But I never said we were getting out of it.

Mr. M. Currie: I think it might have been the minister before you or something, I'm not sure. But there was talk that if that wasn't there everything would be great. Anyway, so you haven't got rid of the contract or anything?

Mr. LeClair: No, not yet.

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

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct) program, called a great program and we're really getting a lot of positive feedback on it. But just one comment that was made to me by one young fisher was that he would have liked to have seen some of the financial components of the training done at the start, because he said that's kind of a key component of being successful in the end, versus some of the other training at the start.

Mr. LeClair: On the list of training, you mean?

Mr. Henderson: Yeah. It was just a suggestion. I think he went to some of the

FA meetings and all those kinds of things. He just said he was hoping to get the financial component at the very start, which made some sense.

Mr. LeClair: That's a good point too.

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct) most important point to being successful and viable into the future. So I'm just passing that as a suggestion to consider maybe for future.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, that's a good point too.

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

Mr. Watts: Yeah, Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Not including this year, how many years are actually left on the OCI agreement?

Mr. LeClair: Three.

Mr. Watts: There is three years left.

Mr. LeClair: It's over in 2013, right?

Mr. Watts: I've another question, but I think it's more of a question that should be directed to federal inspection. I'm just wondering if you can answer.

There is a number of fishermen in different ports who kind of get together, two or three fishermen, and truck their lobsters to another port. Is there any rules or regulations regarding the vehicle that they transport those lobsters in? I'm not saying there should be, but I'm just wondering if there is?

Mr. LeClair: I don't think so. As far as I know, any fishermen can put his lobster as long - as they're not peddling or something - they can put them in the back of their truck and take them somewhere to a point of sale.

Mr. Watts: I was just wondering how sticky these feds were on that.

Mr. LeClair: Every fishermen knows you have to put them on ice or keep them at a point where they're not going to be dead by the time they're sold. Of course the buyer wouldn't be selling them. If they're selling to a buyer he's going to be looking at that. I don't think there is -

Mr. Watts: You're going to be looking for quality, yeah.

Mr. LeClair: That would probably be, as far as licensing, a DFO issue probably in that area, I don't know. But we don't have it. I think they can just put them on the truck and take them to whatever point if they're selling them to another buyer.

Mr. Watts: Yeah, well, that's good. I was just wondering how sticky the feds might be.

Chair: Any further questions on Seafood Services section?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, thank you. Minister, the bluefin tagging research study, how did that work out? Do you have the results of the study?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: That project was just supporting the PEI Fisherman's Association to hire someone to put the research program together. That project is now submitted for funding to ACOA, our aquaculture fisheries research initiative innovation and some other funders, and it's in the final stages of going through approval. So the research on tagging the tuna is going to be done this summer.

Mr. Bagnall: It hasn't been done yet?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: We're hoping to tag 50 fish to develop a catch-and-release fishery. So that grant there was they hired someone to put their overall proposal together.

Mr. Bagnall: The \$50,000 to AVC science centre there that we put into that. That goes to who? Does that go to the university itself or does that go to any individuals or what's the story on it?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: There are two components on that \$50,000. Twenty-five thousand of it is used to leverage funding from ACOA's Atlantic Innovation Fund. It's the lobster quality moult project. As a requirement of AIF, ACOA will only give them so much money, so they look to the province, to the private sector, to processors, to whoever, to make up the balance. That's like a 3 or \$4 million project. So there is 25 grand there towards that project and then 25,000 towards kind of operating cost of the centre.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. Now your lobster strategy funding. Could you explain that a little bit to me, deputy?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: I mean, lobster strategy funding, the announcement was partnering with the federal government towards a promotion, product development and innovation program. Okay? ACOA had announced that \$10 million fund.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: All right, so we had announced that we would approve funds and partner with them and the industry on initiatives. So the lobster, that program, there are two large projects there, one on product development through the seafood processors and one on process innovation through the seafood processors. Then there's been a number of promotional

initiatives like the four-city lobster promotion.

Mr. Bagnall: So this is -

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: (Indistinct) Ottawa (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: So this is where you put your dollars in to get the marketing dollars that were available under that program?

Mr. LeClair: You can, yes.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Some of them.

Mr. Bagnall: So who's doing the marketing now, then, if you put that dollars in for a marketing program for lobster or whatever? Who's the (Indistinct), who's doing the marketing?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: The actual marketing? I mean, like in the case of the four-city lobster promotion in Canada, that was done in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto. That project was sponsored by the seafood processors and association in New Brunswick and PEI, and ACOA contributed to it.

Mr. LeClair: All the provinces.

Mr. Bagnall: Well, I guess, is that -

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: (Indistinct) to individuals.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess what I have a concern there, isn't that like leaving the fox in the henhouse to do your marketing?

Mr. LeClair: No. And some money goes to the Lobster Council of Canada, too.

Mr. Bagnall: No, I'm talking about the marketing part. Because what I'm saying is

you're turning the money all back into the processors to do the marketing, and yet the lobster fishermen have been telling us for years that that's the problem why they're not getting their price, and yet we're getting money and we're turning around and we're giving it to these companies to do our marketing, and I'm just wondering -

Mr. LeClair: They put on a pretty good -

Mr. Bagnall: I'm just saying, you know, if you'd done some research into the best way to be doing it.

Mr. LeClair: You know, we had John Saxton hired. We've worked with the Lobster Council of Canada, we're working with Newfoundland - what's the one? Anyway, I can't think of the one in Newfoundland. Do you know it?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister:
Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation.

Mr. LeClair: Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation. All those areas, we all want the same thing. We want more money for our product, and marketing. Whether it's the PEI Seafood Processors Association that are getting the product out there and getting it across to the cities and across the country, and into China and wherever, and into the Boston seafood shows and those places, it's still promoting our product. It has nothing to do with who's promoting it.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, I know that. I'm not questioning that part of it. What I'm saying is that last year we had disastrous prices, we put \$10 million into a marketing program that we turned around and gave the processors that are doing the buying and the processing of our lobster, and gave them the marketing part, and yet we're getting lower prices this year. Do you know where I'm coming from?

Mr. LeClair: In a way, but -

Mr. Bagnall: Should we not be separating the marketing part of it away from the processors? Let somebody do some marketing strategy on it?

Mr. LeClair: Who would we get to do it?

Mr. Bagnall: Set up your own marketing thing and let the processors buy the product from you. From your marketing people. All the lobster comes into your marketing board and the processors buy from you.

Mr. LeClair: We have a market development officer (Indistinct) -

Mr. Bagnall: But if you were out, if you had a -

Mr. LeClair: - who we've just hired in the past year or so - Dave is with us - and he's doing a lot of research, a lot of work in marketing, too, on his own, besides, with government.

Mr. Bagnall: Who'd you hire?

Mr. LeClair: Dave McGuire.

Mr. Bagnall: Dave McGuire? Is that Joe's son?

Mr. LeClair: No.

Mr. Bagnall: Who is he? Where's he from?

Mr. LeClair: I don't know whose son he is, do you?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: I don't.

Mr. LeClair: I didn't go into the family history. I don't know.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. I thought there was a Dave McGuire that was Joe's son. Not the

same person, anyway. Okay.

Mr. LeClair: Not Joe's son, I know that.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. So my concern is, when we're trying to market our lobster, we're trying to get the best price. Everybody wants the best price for our fishermen. We get \$10 million to do a marketing program, and we turn around and we put it all back into the processors' hands that are buying our lobster at the present time -

Mr. LeClair: Okay.

Mr. Bagnall: - and I have a concern there. That's all.

Mr. LeClair: But it's not all our money. It's ACOA's money and federal money, too.

Mr. Bagnall: I understand that.

Mr. LeClair: They put guidelines on it, where they want it. There's certain guidelines. Certain guidelines had to go through the PEI Seafood Processors Association. That was a federal initiative and federal guidelines through ACOA. So I mean, if we want to leverage our money, and we don't have as much to leverage as the federal, I mean, we go along with it.

The other part is if it goes to the private sector, or some private sector to do some initiatives here, it's a loan. So in order to get a grant it has to go through an association.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Mr. LeClair: That's what they want.

Mr. Bagnall: So, that five-point plan was all federal dollars, then.

Mr. LeClair: Not a chance, no. There was a lot of our money, too.

Mr. Bagnall: You just told me it was a federal initiative.

Mr. LeClair: No, that's what the feds put on, that was their criteria. They put it on what they brought to us. We were flexible with our money, but that's the criteria they put.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: ACOA took \$2 million out of a PEI allocation and put it into a fund called the lobster fund, and the five-point plan, one of the elements was we would match 2 million and 2 million to carry out market development, product development and innovation in the lobster sector.

Mr. LeClair: We put just as much in, but we didn't have the same criteria.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: But I mean, I don't think it's fair. I don't think there's too many stones that aren't overturned -

Mr. Bagnall: No, and I understand.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: - looking for stuff.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm not questioning that.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: I mean, Minister McKinley (Indistinct) of fisheries just the other day.

Mr. Bagnall: I guess it just drives me crazy to see that when we get these marketing things we turn around and we turn it over to the processors, who - all of the fishermen, or 1,300 fishermen across PEI, or across PEI and fishermen across Atlantic Canada, tell you the only reason we're not getting a decent price is because our processors are trying to keep the price down and not paying any price.

Yet when we get \$10 million of marketing, we give the marketing money to the seafood processors to do the marketing, and the price goes down, it doesn't go up.

Mr. LeClair: Well, yes, and through innovation, we travel a lot, government travels a lot through innovation -

Mr. Bagnall: I'm not blaming you, minister, I'm not attacking you on this. I'm just making some observations.

Mr. LeClair: Yes, okay.

Mr. Bagnall: So don't get it wrong. I'm not trying to attack you or anything like that. I just have an issue with that, and that's a concern.

Chair: (Indistinct) go to the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, is there any inventory of live lobster left in sou' west Nova that you're aware of?

Mr. LeClair: From last year, before our season opened?

Mr. M. Currie: Their season (Indistinct) -

Mr. LeClair: Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. M. Currie: - spring.

Mr. LeClair: No. Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. M. Currie: Everything's gone out of Nova Scotia?

Mr. LeClair: As far as I know, yes.

Chair: Further question on that section.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Marine Fisheries and Seafood Services: 2,043,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

We're at the second, halfway down, page 87, starting Aquaculture.

Aquaculture. "Appropriations provided to manage and carry out programs and services to develop shellfish and finfish aquaculture and the estuarial shell fisheries, to address industry constraints such as invasive species and to encourage the development of new aquaculture opportunities." Administration: 8,500. Equipment: 16,300. Materials, Supplies and Services: 43,200. Professional and Contract Services: 19,300. Salaries: 566,100. Travel and Training: 60,300. Grants: 559,900. Total Aquaculture: 1,273,600.

Question?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, with all the expertise that we have, with our college out here at UPEI and people in the industry, I'm just wondering what can be done to eradicate the sea lettuce issue that we have, not only for clams and oysters, but mussels also, that's in our rivers, our estuaries. Is there anything being done this year to make an aggressive move to eradicate the problems that we have?

Mr. LeClair: Yes, we gave funding to the PEI Shellfish Association to go to Ontario to look at a harvester.

Mr. M. Currie: All right.

Mr. LeClair: They came back with a plan for a harvester and they're looking at probably building their own on PEI here.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Mr. LeClair: But the problem is that harvester alone is somewhere in the -

Mr. M. Currie: Acadian Machine Works Ltd. could do that.

Mr. LeClair: Acadian or Armand Martin, Martins Machine Shop, or Armand Martin in Tignish was looking at it.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Mr. LeClair: They can build one, but the capacity it has to clean a river, I guess you would need probably three or four of the machines.

Mr. M. Currie: Sea lettuce doesn't take up much space if you run it through a grinder like you do the old wringer-washer and just bale it or something.

Mr. LeClair: That's the other issue we're trying to find out. We are doing a test with Cavendish. We were looking at Cavendish farms with their bio - with their digester there -

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. LeClair: - to see if they could use it.

Mr. M. Currie: Sounds good.

Mr. LeClair: We're also looking at some -

Mr. M. Currie: Compost.

Mr. LeClair: - agriculture for compost, and products like that. Once we get to the point of getting a use for it, and maybe if there's a value in it, then we'll probably be looking at harvesting it.

Mr. M. Currie: Could you forward me the information you received on the harvesters,

or any pictures you had? I'd be interested in that.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. We can do that.

Mr. M. Currie: I think that it's high time that we had - I'm pretty sure we got the technology today to - the harvesters - skim that stuff off the top or whatever.

Mr. LeClair: There are a couple of places in Ontario where they do it. What they were looking at, it's expensive, it's not cheap.

Mr. M. Currie: Well, I'm sure -

Mr. LeClair: For the harvester and to run the thing.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah.

Mr. LeClair: If you get a return on the lettuce itself, it might be a help to get even trucked away where it has to go.

Mr. M. Currie: The second question I have is: Can you give me an update on the halibut project that you're doing in Victoria?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. I'll let the deputy give you an update on that. Richard?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: The halibut project is partly funded by DFO's aquaculture program, and we have some funds approved in that as well. Our funding goes towards a couple pieces of equipment, to kind of clean up the effluent water before it goes back to the estuary, or out to the - at Victoria.

They have, I understand, about 30,000 fish - halibut - that they're holding there. They're working on kind of a long-term plan or developing that aquaculture business there in Victoria.

Mr. M. Currie: Sounds good. There's a

salmon facility in Fortune. Deputy, you're probably aware of the one. I just can't think of the name of it.

Mr. LeClair: Aqua (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: They were experimenting with enhanced growth hormone. Is there any uptake on that one?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: That facility is primarily a research facility.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: They're looking at developing transgene fish - or transgenic fish -

Mr. M. Currie: Right.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: - where they take a growth promoting gene out of one fish and put it into a salmon, or a trout, or a char. They're still in the research phase, so they're not at the point where they can launch that and go out and license another country to produce and grow that out on a commercial scale.

Mr. M. Currie: But they are -

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: But they tell us they're getting close to getting approval to do that.

Mr. M. Currie: Through the FDA.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Through the US FDA.

Mr. M. Currie: And the CFIA, are they approving the facility?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Their facility is licensed as a transgenic operation by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Mr. M. Currie: Oh, it is?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: That's where they're licensed through.

Mr. M. Currie: Okay. So, to move from research to marketing the product, are you saying they can sell their product?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: The US FDA would have to approve that grown or cultured transgenic fish are substantially the same as - a transgenic salmon would be substantially the same as a cultured salmon. That there's no difference in any way, shape or form, in terms of putting it into the marketplace. So then they would likely license some other countries to produce those fish in land-based operations and sell them into the US market, which is the biggest market in the world for cuts of salmon.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: The consultant fee related to aquaculture, \$9,000, what was that for? Who was the consultant? That's in professional and contract services there.

Mr. LeClair: Okay, 9,000?

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah. It was a \$9,000 consultant.

Mr. LeClair: AVC study, to determine the -

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Mr. LeClair: It was an AVC - Atlantic Vet College.

Mr. Bagnall: AVC. Okay.

The \$5,000 cost-shared study with the Government of Nova Scotia to review aquacultural policy, what changes are going

to be taking place there?

Mr. LeClair: Got some changes on that one?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: It's a study just looking at aquaculture governance in Atlantic Canada. The way we operate our leasing program might be a little different than the way Nova Scotia operates theirs and New Brunswick operates theirs.

Mr. Bagnall: So do we see any changes that are going to take place here? For the aquaculture -

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: The program that we have here - DFO is the lead and the industry and the province and the federal government all pay a portion of the program - is a good model. The three parties like the way we do it here.

Mr. Bagnall: But you're doing -

Mr. LeClair: On the leasing program.

Mr. Bagnall: You're doing legislation here, though. Are there going to be any changes in our legislation that will affect aquaculture producers in PEI?

Mr. LeClair: Reviewing legislation right now - no.

Mr. Bagnall: So, there aren't going to be any changes coming up there in legislation?

Mr. LeClair: Not -

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: It's possible in fish out policy -

Mr. LeClair: Well, in fish out policy, but -

Mr. Bagnall: What was that?

Mr. LeClair: Not necessarily, no. I don't

see a whole lot of changes in legislation coming through.

Mr. Bagnall: No problem.

Okay, you had 65,000 for project funding there, under grants breakdown. What project fundings were those?

Mr. LeClair: Okay, 65,000. I don't see that.

Mr. Bagnall: It's the last one on number 27, according to the one you gave me. It's 559,900 total grants, but there is 65,000 in there for project funding.

Mr. LeClair: No, that's over here. That's for projects that may be submitted next year.

Mr. Bagnall: Pardon?

Mr. LeClair: That's just anticipated project funding that's coming in for next year. I don't know what they'll be yet.

Mr. Bagnall: So you have \$65,000 in your - to budget for aquaculture for projects.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: No, we have 559,000.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, he knows the overall numbers.

Mr. Bagnall: But I'm talking about this -

Mr. LeClair: Sixty-five thousand is miscellaneous project funding.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Mr. LeClair: And that can be used up pretty fast.

Mr. Bagnall: No, I understand that. So if somebody has a project in aquaculture they can apply under this grant here?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: And you have 65,000 in order to -

Mr. LeClair: That we can -

Mr. Bagnall: Do you have a stipulation on the amount of money that these projects can be?

Mr. LeClair: No. The stipulation on a lot of the funding is up to \$10,000, I believe it is. Then we want it matched, in a lot of cases.

Mr. Bagnall: So they're going to have to - it's going to be 50-50 dollars?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. That's good.

Mr. LeClair: Most of our funding, yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: The PEI Mussel Aquaculture Productivity Improvement Fund, what are we doing there? I know we've got 200,000 budgeted - grants. What are we doing with that money?

Mr. LeClair: It's basically all to do with tunicate.

Mr. Bagnall: It's all the tunicate stuff?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Where are we with that now, minister?

Mr. LeClair: They're coming up with some pretty innovative stuff. They're doing the spraying to get the tunicate off, and they're fine-tuning the equipment all the time with the sprays and making - I was out last year a couple of times in the boats, and they're doing a good job. They can live with it now. They're (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: No, I was actually down in the wharf a couple of weeks ago. I looked at a brand new unit that John Sullivan was putting on his boat. He's got quite a -

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: He's got quite a sprayer there that he's hooking up.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. It's a huge expense, but they're seeing the results and -

Mr. Bagnall: What are you contributing to that? Fifty cent dollars again? Up to a certain figure?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. Between 50 and 70 - some of them are up as high as 75 for the tunicate.

Mr. Bagnall: To how much? To a maximum of what?

Mr. LeClair: Just depending on the size of - I don't know if we even had a max - we looked at the project.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: The actual program was administered by the aquaculture alliance, so it was a \$300,000 program.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: A hundred thousand from ACOA, 100,000 from DFO that came through us, and 100,000 from the department budget. They funded projects up to 75%.

Mr. Bagnall: Up to 75%. But with no maximum?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: (Indistinct) depending on the cost. I don't think there was any - it might have been a max of \$50,000 project, or something like

that. They funded a number of pieces of equipment.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Chair: I'm going to go to the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness for a question.

Mr. Henderson: Just on the section - is this the section where the PEI Shellfish Association - the shellfish enhancement program?

Mr. LeClair: Yes.

Mr. Henderson: Okay. What's the status of their budget for the coming year? Is it same, up, down?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. It'll not be changed. Actually there's more in that. We've given them more this year.

Mr. Henderson: More than last year?

Mr. LeClair: We've given them money there for an executive director -

Mr. Henderson: Okay.

Mr. LeClair: - in there. So we added that in there.

Mr. Henderson: But the actual work as far as shellfish enhancement is approximately the same as last year, then.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Henderson: Okay. Well, that's a good program, so I encourage you to do that.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

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

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, there was a

serious problem with parking over on Stratford last year for the oyster fishermen. Has that issue been resolved?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. We made a statement in the House here not long ago about that.

Mr. M. Currie: That's the Duffy Road?

Mr. LeClair: Fixed her up, yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: Who got the work for that?

Mr. LeClair: I think it was TPW, I have no -

Mr. M. Currie: Through TPW.

Mr. MacKinley: I could find out for you.

Mr. M. Currie: No problem, that's fine.

Chair: Further questions on that section?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: One hundred and fifteen thousand for aquaculture of futures fund. What's that program being used for?

Mr. LeClair: The fund was used to support projects of priority in the industry; investigation into a mechanical harvester for removal of sea lettuce; investigation into sea duck -

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, I'm not worried about the sea duck. The mortality rate in the Bedeque Bay, that was part of that issue?

Mr. LeClair: Oyster growth and mortality in Bedeque Bay, yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: So did you do a study on that to find out what was causing the high mortality?

Mr. LeClair: We did.

Mr. Bagnall: What were the results?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: That actual study was a project under the Aquaculture and Fisheries Research Initiative and then this fund gave them a little extra contribution towards it. Silt is an issue in Summerside Harbour.

Mr. Bagnall: Who did the work? Do you know?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: The work was done by AVC and DFO.

Mr. Bagnall: So (Indistinct) silt problem continue? So where's the silt problem coming from?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Down through the water course.

Mr. Bagnall: So is it running off the mainland? Where are they saying it's causing the mortality rate? Where's it coming from?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: There are two rivers that feed, Dunk River and Wilmot.

Mr. Bagnall: The two rivers?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: They're saying that the silt problem's coming from the two rivers?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: It can be a factor in the survival of oysters, particularly in the late spring, if oysters are covered in silt.

Mr. Bagnall: So are you doing any dredging to make sure that doesn't happen?

Mr. LeClair: No, we aren't.

Mr. Bagnall: Because if the silt continues without any correction being done, it's just going to continue to get worse.

Mr. LeClair: There are initiatives done with the ALUS program and with the farming sector now.

Mr. Bagnall: What are they doing for that?

Mr. LeClair: They increase buffer zones and taken sensitive land out of production. High-slope land and things like that, which are all a help. They don't answer the problem but -

Chair: Further questions on that section?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, two more. The aquaculture environmental practice program. Explain that one. How were they improving the practices that they're doing? The processors? How are you checking it? Do we have somebody running around, checking that out all the time for us to see if that's being done?

Mr. LeClair: It's the same thing as the 50% grant up to \$10,000. They're doing projects on how to get rid of -

Mr. Bagnall: So we're only doing the one project then, with 26 - eight of them. Is that what you're telling me?

Mr. LeClair: It's up to \$10,000, so the 26,000 would be at least three projects. There are three projects.

Mr. Bagnall: Did you use that money last year?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, that was spent last year.

Mr. Bagnall: So who got the money last year? What projects were used last year for

the funding?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: We did a drum filter at the halibut operation, a drum filter to clean the water up before it goes back to the estuary.

Mr. Bagnall: That's in Victoria?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Yeah. And there was (Indistinct) of the pressure washer on removing tunicates under that -

Mr. Bagnall: Say that again.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: A Patton from down your way, Randy Patton. And then a sea duck patrol project, looking at (Indistinct) -

Mr. Bagnall: I don't care who got it. I'm trying to see what was that project that -

Mr. LeClair: Which one? The pressure on?

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, the second one.

Mr. LeClair: Well, that was for tunicate. We helped out with a pressure washer there.

Mr. Bagnall: Oh, that's a for a pressure washer?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: So they can get money through this program for pressure washers also?

Mr. LeClair: If it's a certain type of pressure washer, yeah. If it's the right piece of equipment.

Mr. Bagnall: No, that's good. I commend you on that.

In the Atlantic Innovation Fund, 45,000 there. Two research projects with industry

and one related to tunicates. Who did those?

Mr. LeClair: I don't have that one, Richard. Go ahead.

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: There are two large AIF projects that are Atlantic Innovation Fund-ACOA projects that are underway. One is through the aquaculture alliance, and they have the vet college contracted to do the work on tunicates.

As part of that, I explained earlier, if ACOA puts in, let's say, a certain percentage of funding of 3.5 million, they look for provincial contributions and industry contributions to leverage. So there's a contribution to the aquaculture alliance under that and there's another contribution to another AIF that the vet college has on healthy fish. Dr. Larry Hammell, he's a got a three point some million dollar AIF project as well.

Mr. Bagnall: So he's leveraging a healthy fish, healthy food, healthy environment one?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: That's through the vet college again?

Richard Gallant Deputy Minister: Yes, it is.

Mr. Bagnall: We give them a lot of money, don't we?

Mr. LeClair: We work well with the vet college.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Aquaculture: 1,273,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Top of page 88.

Single Window Service.

Access PEI. “Appropriations provided for the administrative support for staff who deliver programs and services on behalf of all government departments through Access PEI sites.” Administration: 141,500. Equipment: 6,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 51,600. Professional and Contract Services: 13,500. Salaries: 2,459,900. Travel and Training: 54,800. Total Access PEI: 2,727,300.

Questions there?

Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. M. Currie: Who’s looking after Access PEI sites now?

Mr. LeClair: Tim Garrity.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Who’s JB web consulting? Who’s that?

Mr. LeClair: Judy Blakney. She did some consulting on our -

Mr. M. Currie: Rural action.

Mr. LeClair: - SWAT, single window access technology.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. The next section.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Single Window Service: 2,727,300.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Rural Development.

Community Development. “Appropriations provided for support staff and program funding for community development initiatives including infrastructure assistance for Island communities.” Administration: 15,900. Equipment: Nil. Materials, Supplies and Services: 17,700. Professional and Contract Services: 50,000. Salaries: 691,800. Travel and Training: 40,400. Grants: 5,889,600. Total Community Development: 6,705,400.

Questions on that?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: West Hawk Associates, who are they?

Mr. LeClair: It’s a firm that did the editing on the rural strategy from Ontario.

Mr. Bagnall: Where are they from?

Mr. LeClair: Ontario.

Mr. Bagnall: What did they do for you?

Mr. LeClair: The editing on the rural strategy.

Mr. Bagnall: The editing on the rural strategy. How come we would have to go to Ontario to get an editing on a rural strategy for PEI? Why wouldn’t we - was there nobody qualified in PEI to do that work?

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. LeClair: They’ve done work in the past and they did good work and we wanted to -

Mr. Bagnall: Was that tendered?

Mr. LeClair: No.

Mr. Bagnall: It wasn’t tendered?

Mr. LeClair: No, it was sourced.

Mr. Bagnall: You just turned around and handed it to an Ontario firm without giving PEI firms a chance?

Premier Ghiz: When you give it to a PEI firm, and then you guys complain that it's patronage. You can't win with you.

Mr. Bagnall: Premier, things were going along good until you spoke up.

Mr. M. Currie: We're getting along fine here. You just (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: We heard enough roaring from you in Question Period.

Chair: Further questions on that section?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: So no firms on PEI had a shot at that contract?

Mr. LeClair: No.

Mr. Bagnall: That's no problem. If that's the way you're going to do it, that's fine. You're jumping it to 50,000. Are you going to give another contract to a Quebec firm this time along with the Ontario one? Or why would we have two this year? Why are we going from 25 to 50?

Mr. LeClair: It's just a budget number. We don't know what we're going to be doing this year, but we definitely don't have to do the rural action plan, we already done one.

Mr. Bagnall: But minister, will you make a commitment here that if you're going to be going out (Indistinct) that you will put it out to a tender and allow Island firms to have a

chance to bid on it, rather than just giving it to firms from off-Island without giving our own people a chance?

Mr. LeClair: We'll have to follow procurement procedures.

Mr. Bagnall: You didn't follow it on this one. I mean, you just handed out a 25,000 contract to an Ontario firm without allowing PEI companies to have a shot at it.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, I will definitely look into it and see what's available on PEI, and if we can find a good firm that will do it, and do what we want, we'll do it.

Mr. Bagnall: All I'm asking is to put an RFP out and if there is nobody on PEI that answers it or qualifies for the RFP, then fine, I don't care where you go. But all I'm asking is if you'll give our Island firms a chance.

Mr. LeClair: Yes, sir.

Mr. Bagnall: You'll make that commitment?

Mr. LeClair: I will do that.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Mr. Bagnall: No.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: There is \$3,540,000 for the Island Community Fund. Where are you spending that money? Have you got a breakdown?

Mr. LeClair: No, I don't. That's next year's and the projects are coming in.

Mr. Bagnall: You got some last year. There is 500,000 this year and you spent 3,540,000.

Mr. LeClair: No, we can do that. I was thinking this year, but we have another 3 million to spend.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah, I know. You had that last year, do you have a breakdown of where you spent that?

Mr. LeClair: We can bring it back.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, would you bring that back for me?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Chair: Anything further?

Mr. Bagnall: No, there is 789,400 Community Development Program.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Do you have a breakdown of how you spent that money?

Mr. LeClair: We can get you that.

Mr. Bagnall: I'd like that. The Rural Development Support Program, what's that, minister? That's 140,700.

Mr. LeClair: To assist community-based economic development organizations with conditional contributions that will enable them to complete a financial package in support of capital and related projects at the local community level. Do planning. (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Give me an example of where you'd use that money.

Mr. LeClair: Just a second now, I'll find that. I'll give you an example of that.

Mr. Bagnall: If you just table it that's all I need.

Mr. LeClair: We can bring it back, yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: If you do that, that's fine.

Mr. LeClair: But I can give you an idea of what they were, if you want.

Chair: Further questions on that section?

Shall it carry?

Mr. Bagnall: I'll carry it, minister, but you made a commitment to bring that back?

Mr. LeClair: Yes, sir.

Mr. Bagnall: Good.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Rural Development: 6,705,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development: 13,357,200.

Shall it carry? Carried.

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Employment Development Agency.

Management.

General. "Appropriations provided for the administration of program delivery, budget management and payment processing."

Administration: 7,500. Equipment: 2,700.

Materials, Supplies and Services: 2,500.

Salaries: 176,300. Travel and Training:

6,600. Total Management: 195,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Job Creation and Placement.

Community and Business Projects.

“Appropriations provided for the wages of individuals hired by businesses and non-profit organizations to work on approved projects, the majority of which are rural-based.” Special Projects Program: 2,326,500. Job Creation Program: 445,100. Jobs for Youth Program: 779,400. Rural Job Initiative: 1,684,700. Total Community and Business Projects: 5,235,700.

Questions?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Let’s just start on the special projects, minister. With the job losses and the economy the way it is, did you not consider raising the dollars this year, raising - I mean, you came in the same as you did the year before. There is a bit of an increase there.

Mr. LeClair: We added \$300,000 into it.

Mr. Bagnall: But with the increase in wages, that’s going to take all of that. I think that’s what you did, you put that in to cover their wage increase on the employees.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, it covered the wage increase.

Mr. Bagnall: I know you have to do that.

Mr. LeClair: But it’s \$300,000, too.

Mr. Bagnall: I know. But there seems to be a lot of people out there that still aren’t able to get jobs, they’re still looking, they’re still applying to the EDA program and they’re having trouble getting approved, or they can’t get work. I don’t know what the answer is there either, minister.

Mr. LeClair: There is no easy answer, but

these projects - you get minimum wage still. They’re not the most lucrative jobs in the world.

Mr. Bagnall: I know that, and they are a help to -

Mr. LeClair: They are a help to a lot of people.

Mr. Bagnall: Sometimes they help subsidize an income with a family where they can get 14 weeks and then gets them unemployment and it kind of helps them with a second income for the family to let them survive.

Mr. LeClair: Oh yeah. I know.

Mr. Bagnall: I don’t know if we can ever - I suppose if you had 10 million in the budget you’d use it, that’s the problem. It’s a situation there where -

Mr. LeClair: The previous year we did -

Mr. Bagnall: - is it never enough?

Mr. LeClair: No. About every year we do increase it. We increased it last year, we increased it this year. But as the minimum wage goes up it gets these people a little more money, you know what I mean?

Mr. Bagnall: Were there any special warrants last year in this program that aren’t included in the budget?

Mr. LeClair: No.

Mr. Bagnall: There was no special warrants?

Mr. LeClair: No.

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

Mr. M. Currie: We used to table for the then-opposition projects by county. Do you have that to table today?

Mr. LeClair: No I don't.

Mr. Bagnall: Would you bring that back?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Premier Ghiz: By county?

Mr. M. Currie: By county.

Mr. Bagnall: List of all the programs, just -

Mr. M. Currie: And the projects, where they went.

Mr. Bagnall: Where the money went and who got the special projects.

Mr. M. Currie: We used to table that. The other thing is, minister -

Mr. LeClair: Five-hundred and fifty of them. Do you want them all?

Mr. M. Currie: Pardon?

Mr. LeClair: Five-hundred and fifty.

Mr. M. Currie: Projects?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: Whatever. We used to table them.

Mr. Bagnall: We don't need the whole application, (Indistinct) of what the project was and who got it.

Mr. M. Currie: You say it's a rural development initiative. I think you'll find there is quite a few of these projects head for the urban areas too.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: They do. I think three years ago this section used to be 3.5 million. You got 2 million extra in there now. You got that many more projects?

Mr. LeClair: That would be the rural job initiative is in there. That's a new initiative altogether.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Are we looking at the job creation program, is that what you're talking about right now?

Mr. LeClair: You're looking at special projects now. Are you at job creation? But the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters was saying the total budget is up, which it is.

Mr. M. Currie: (Indistinct) million dollars.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah. That's the increase in minimum wage, the 300,000 in special projects plus the RJI program.

Chair: Further questions on that section?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Is a lot of this money - any of this money coming through the Labour Market Agreement, in this section?

Mr. LeClair: Any of this money?

Mr. Bagnall: Or I mean, any that you're subsidizing with, that Labour Market Agreement?

Mr. LeClair: No.

Mr. Bagnall: Nothing is going through Skills PEI or anything on that.

Mr. LeClair: No.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. So this 450,000 for Job Creation Programs, these are the projects that go to the groups?

Mr. LeClair: They're community based projects, they go to community and they assist certain types of clients. They get hired on job creations.

Mr. Bagnall: Are these the ones that have a hard time getting a job and you do some work skills with them so you can get them into the workforce?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Good program.

Mr. LeClair: Exactly.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: Minister, you used to have a section in this for private sector initiative. I don't see that any more. The other one we used to have was post-secondary where -

Mr. LeClair: That's over -

Mr. M. Currie: That's over with the minister of innovation?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah, it's in innovation.

Mr. M. Currie: Thank you.

Chair: Further questions?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: The Jobs for Youth Program, are you going to be able to handle the students that are looking for work? What percentage are we not going to be able to handle?

Mr. LeClair: I don't know what percentage we'll be able to handle, but we certainly can't handle all the students that are looking for work. But there is a lot of them right now at Royal Star. There are 15, I think, over 15 or 20 students that want to work there. It's great. They work in the evenings -

Mr. Bagnall: I have the same thing in Montague. We have students going in there on the weekends.

Mr. LeClair: So you got to give students credit. They're not all coming to me looking for jobs and they're going out and finding their own. Right now they're working, and they're working in the evenings. They shut them down at 10:00 p.m. on a school evening. They want them to go home at 10:00 p.m. from after school. They have a real good program there and it doesn't affect their school work and it gives them extra money. I got to give them credit for doing that.

Mr. Bagnall: No, that's good.

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

Mr. M. Currie: So you'll bring back the information by county, all the community projects and stuff that was done?

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. M. Currie: That'd be fine. We're not interested in names, just the communities and the breakdown by county.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Would you bring back a list of all of the projects that were approved for Jobs for Youth? Are there any going in to the public sector anymore?

Mr. LeClair: Public sector, yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: So would you bring a breakdown of what's going into public sector, who's got approved and the private (Indistinct)?

Mr. LeClair: We have public sector, they have post-secondary, we have public sector. There are 78 positions in public sector.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay, would you bring down a list on those? Not who got hired, who got approved for students?

Mr. LeClair: What public sector -

Mr. Bagnall: Public sector and private.

Mr. LeClair: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: We always used to get that.

Mr. LeClair: They have to apply for a student.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, I understand that.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Job Creation -

Mr. Bagnall: No, no. The Rural Job Initiative is 1,684,700. How are you breaking down that?

Mr. LeClair: How am I breaking it down?

Mr. Bagnall: Yes.

Mr. LeClair: What do you mean?

Premier Ghiz: Need to live in a rural area.

Mr. LeClair: Wage subsidies for - it's positions across the province breaking down to -

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, do you have a breakdown of that?

Mr. LeClair: I don't have one but I can get you one.

Mr. Bagnall: If you can get me one, I'll carry the section.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Job Creation and Placement:
5,235,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Employment Development Agency:
5,430,700.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Bagnall: We'll call the hour.

Mr. LeClair: You want me to finish it?

Mr. Bagnall: You're going to bring another minister on (Indistinct)?

Mr. LeClair: But can I finish this one?

Mr. Bagnall: You don't have to do that one if you're bringing another one on.

Mr. LeClair: Oh.

Mr. Bagnall: Attorney General, but we're not even going to get started.

Mr. LeClair: Do you want me to finish this? Oh, I don't have to read that.

Mr. Bagnall: Not, if you're bringing somebody else on you don't.

Chair: We want to bring the Speaker back.

Mr. Bagnall: Then do that.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) it wasn't just you guys, it was a budget, it always went over budget. So the accountants when we came in said: Listen, why don't you just put the real amount under EDA and get it over with instead of always writing special warrants?

Mr. Bagnall: You're still a million dollars less.

Premier Ghiz: What's that?

Mr. Bagnall: You're still a million dollars less and we used to do -

Mr. LeClair: No, two over. You just said we were two over.

Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair and 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 the grant of supply to Her Majesty, I beg leave to report that the committee has made progress and begs leave to sit again. I move the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Recess, hon. members, till 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Motions Other Than Government

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

Mr. M. Currie: Motion No. 53.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 53.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, the following motion:

WHEREAS the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) has estimated the cost of complying with regulations in Prince Edward Island is \$114 million annually, with small businesses shouldering the highest burden of these costs;

AND WHEREAS regulatory reform has potential to greatly improve both the productivity and profitability of many Island businesses while also streamlining costs to government;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Prince Edward Island committed to a Red Tape review in its 2008 budget;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly encourage the government to demonstrate support for the small businesses and entrepreneurs of this province by immediately launching a Red Tape review.

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

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

Certainly a pleasure for me to move this motion because I think it's an issue of critical importance to small businesses on Prince Edward Island.

Bureaucratic red tape is a source of great frustration -

Premier Ghiz: You created it all.

Mr. M. Currie: - including a great waste of time and waste of resources for businesses and governments alike. Complying with government regulations has also been proven to cost small businesses a significant amount of money each year, money that could have been spent reinvesting in their business and into the local economy.

This government and that Premier over there, they broke their promise in 2008 when they said that they were committed to review with the red tape and significantly reduce government regulation to make it easier on businesses. They were going to work with the entrepreneur but they haven't.

Small businesses were relying on the Premier to keep his word. Since he's broken his promise, entrepreneurs are getting more and more discouraged. We need a red tape review and we need it quickly. With regulations so high it's a wonder we have as many successful businesses as we do.

We're still waiting for the change. We're still waiting for the promise to be kept. It's certainly frustrating for the small business community.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: So far, it's been all talk with this government. Any steps they have made to reduce regulation have been minimal at best, as this government has been shown, time and time again, to speak out of both sides of their mouth, to say one thing or another. It's estimated that this is costing the small business community in millions of dollars to comply with the government's red tape.

This current government is actually doing the opposite of reducing regulations. According to a survey by the small businesses in this province they are putting more regulations on our entrepreneurs.

They're increasing fees. An additional 11% of businesses feel that regulations have actually been more burdensome and that regulations have increased as of the survey in 2008 than they did in 2005.

The small business people in this province, they drive our economy. There's certainly entrepreneurs in every sector - our fishermen, our farmers, our tourism entrepreneurs and the people in the health industry, to name a few.

These entrepreneurs and small business owners provide the majority of jobs for Islanders. Without them our Island economy would be non-existent and so would government revenues as a result.

Small businesses need to be supported, not discouraged, from continuing to operate. Entrepreneurs need to be supported and not discouraged from entering business in the first place. As with the recession that is upon us since this government came into power - and created the recession - things have gotten even harder. Liberal times are hard times. It is hard enough to start up and operate a business without trying to cut through massive amounts of red tape. It's a great source of frustration and anxiety amongst many business owners.

In fact, in a recent survey by the CFIB, one in four Island business owners stated that they may not have gone into business in the first place had they known the amount of regulations that this government is putting them on this.

Premier Ghiz: What for? (Indistinct) 75% tax (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: Imagine if one quarter, or 25%, of our small businesses on PEI never started or even opened up their shops. Imagine the loss of jobs. The loss of revenue. The massive shock to the economy

that this would result.

Small businesses deserve to be treated fairly by their government, as they give so much back to their community. Entrepreneurs already work more hours than most people in society in order to ensure the success of businesses. It is simply not fair that they have to spend so much additional time per week trying to comply with pointless government regulations.

In the same survey listed by CFIB, small business owners list compliance with these measures as the most burdensome. I should be clear that it is not these issues themselves that they are necessarily upset about. It's the reporting structures, the paperwork, other compliance measures that cause the headaches related to them.

They so graciously give about 3% of gross sales tax collected to a maximum of \$500. Now, we have over 8,000 businesses on Prince Edward Island. When it's paid back on 3%, the government back about \$4.2 million. We collect, in this province - that penny-pinching finance minister collects about \$208 million. So 3% of that would have been over 6 million.

So there's \$2 million that is not going to these businesses. I think that TIAPEI had made a request to the province a couple of years ago - and it certainly hasn't gone anywhere - but they were saying instead of the \$500 per business it should be raised to \$1,500. That would only make it about 10 or 12 million and I think that would be a first start. It hasn't been changed for a lot of years. The collection of these sales tax is certainly a lot of paperwork.

So the \$500, the business community has grown out of that and it's time for the government to work with the private sector to try and assist them in some way, meeting the \$1,500 that it should be increased to.

They didn't mind increasing all the fees here the last month or so by increasing our revenues by, I think, 7 to \$9 million that they snuck in the back door under the cover of darkness.

Premier Ghiz: Fifth floor did that.

Mr. M. Currie: Yeah, it was the Premier's office. It was. It was the Premier's office that did that.

That's not fair that they can just walk in and increase all those fees and then ask the business community in this province to collect over \$200 million to sales tax and they give them back a measly \$4 million for collecting it - for being the bookkeepers for the cold-hearted banker of a finance minister. That's not fair.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) too much money. (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: It's not fair, Madam Speaker, that they treat the business community like that.

There should be a further tax break. We do pay the highest provincial sales tax in Canada, at 10%. I think that they should do something to help them. Work with the private sector, don't be causing them so much heartache and torment.

Now, workers compensation's another area that's fully funded. There was a big announcement made a couple years ago by the Premier's appointed, Nancy Guptill, the chairman of the facility.

Premier Ghiz: Very good person, don't you think?

Mr. M. Currie: She's in charge of it now. Madam Speaker -

Premier Ghiz: She's very good. You were

in the House (Indistinct) -

Mr. M. Currie: She's a good person.

Madam Speaker, she did go up and announce that the fund is fully funded, so if that's the case then the rates that are being charged to the business communities across PEI should be reduced because all they're doing now is piling on top of the other.

It's my understand that even with the number of people that are employed in this province has dropped in the last couple of years, the numbers of people that are employed at the workers compensation is gone up. Even though we lost our whole hog sector, the forestry industry is completely gone. There's a sector that used to use a lot of workers compensation because of power saw cuts. It is a very dangerous industry to be involved in and certainly there was a lot of accidents involved in it.

Of course, the meat packing plant was another one that there was a lot of workers compensation claims. Now those two industries are gone. There should be less pay-outs and when they're fully funded, they should - and you closed the pop plant and there was a whole bunch of other places that closed too.

Premier Ghiz: They're still open. (Indistinct) great guy doing a great job out there.

Mr. M. Currie: But they will not do anything to work with the private sector in this province and they refuse to commit to change the act. They're just tiptoeing around, all the time, talking about what they're going to do and who they're going to hire to look after the red tape review, Madam Speaker, and they're doing nothing.

Now, we saw in the province here where bankruptcies have increased by 258% since

the Premier took office. Certainly that's one red ribbon that he'll always wear and adorn. There's also a lot of excessive costs that businesses are stuck with in relationship to the board. There's a lot of people working there and I think that it doesn't reflect the amount of people that are working in Prince Edward Island today.

The other issues of concerns that the small businesspeople have is the business registration reporting, employment standards, the financial side - and the environment is one where a lot of companies are extremely upset over the frustration with reporting to environment. That's one that's certainly a major frustration.

There seems to be a breakdown between communications between this government and business communities. Eighty-three per cent of business owners state that they have never been consulted by government about any new regulations relating to their business and 81% feel that government doesn't even consider the impact on business when it imposes new regulations.

How is this supposed to encourage entrepreneurship in this province when the government is dealing from the top down from the Premier's office and implementing fees for the entrepreneurs and not communicating with them?

This government doesn't really have a really good, solid record of supporting our entrepreneurs. Just look what they done with the high-speed Internet fiasco. Government drops an untendered contract right in the hands of Aliant and, in doing so, they're running the small businesses out of business.

We see an Internet service provider in your end of the Island, Madam Speaker, where this government -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) feel so bad, they should (Indistinct).

Mr. M. Currie: - didn't allow them the opportunity to bid on any work. It was a backroom deal done with Aliant.

Premier Ghiz: In the Premier's office again.

Mr. M. Currie: No. Well, yes, it could have been.

They told us, first, there was no development agreement and then they told us there was a development agreement. We still haven't got that tabled.

Premier Ghiz: That must have (Indistinct) on the table.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, it's unfortunate that they promised they were going to be open and transparent and accountable to the business community, but they certainly won't.

I never thought that government was in the business to put businesses out of business. They're supposed to work with and partner with the private sector and the Premier is certainly doing an injustice to all the business community in this province. You see what happens in rural Prince Edward Island where he attacks these small little family-run operations.

What you should have done was give them a license and a territory and they could have done their thing. But no, you would just want Aliant to run right over the top of them. I feel bad that you'd do that. That's not the proper way to do things in Prince Edward Island.

When the Premier announced that he was doing the high-speed Internet fiasco with Aliant he indicated that the federal dollars

that were available to do infrastructure and capital improvements - it was not allowed to - these other Island service providers were not allowed to access this money.

That's unfortunate that the government makes these announcement. They like to get their picture taken with Aliant and then they can't deliver, and you've seen what's happened. There are hundreds of homes that are not hooked up.

Now we have the other fiasco the other day where I think we had to call in the Fire Marshal to deal with this crisis situation regarding turbo sticks.

Premier Ghiz: Do you have high-speed Internet?

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, it's unfortunate the way they're treating the people in rural PEI.

We have to pay 49.95 in rural Prince Edward Island and in urban Charlottetown and Summerside they pay 29.95. So we're treated different. We have second-class service out there. The Premier thinks that's all right. He thinks that as long as he has it in Charlottetown and Aliant is looked after, then that's fine.

He loves doing these untendered contracts, and that's the one he did there and you just saw what they did the other day up in West Prince with the tires. That was well hidden now for over two years. Never saw the minister take his picture with them. He's out with Maggie Brown, getting his picture taken every other day.

Mr. MacKinley: Why not?

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, when he has a contract like that - \$3 million just handed out. I guess you learn from your boss how you do this and the boss has

already showed them how they did Aliant and how they did the high-speed fiasco. So his Cabinet ministers got to follow because they believe that's the right thing to do. That's what you're supposed to do.

They don't consult. They don't work with the private sector. They're doing everything to increase fees and make it hard for the private sector in this province and it's making it very difficult.

The general corporate tax in this province also is at 34%. This is a major frustration for the small business owners. I know, a number of years ago, we started reducing the small business tax in this province and I'm pleased that the Premier and the minister of finance followed through on the commitments that we made and they kept the small business tax - reducing that.

But the corporate tax is one I think they should look at. The sales tax, if they're going to be more competitive in this province, they have to do something to work with the private sector to make them more competitive, to attract their business to this province. They have to do things like that to stimulate this economy and make more people work here.

They're getting enough revenue from the sales tax in this province of over 200-some million dollars and they're not doing anything with it.

We have to do, also, something with regards to allowing and to introduce or work with the federal government to introduce temporary workers or making them temporary to start with and then allowing them to stay here with an immigration policy. We need to do a lot more to harmonize the skills and the trade certificates. But they're not doing anything to work with the business community in attracting the skilled people into this

province. They keep promising that they're going to bring in these programs. They're going to be doing studies.

But the same with the red tape review. We haven't seen anything done there. We need to streamline our process. We've got to have better cross-border compliance for our companies. We have to work on what duties and tariffs and exchange rates are going to benefit the Island community.

The entrepreneurs in this province need to be supported by this government. They need to tackle this issue head-on and not tiptoe around it. They've been doing that for a number of years. If we're going to ensure the success of the small business operators in this province, they're going to have to put a big effort in it. They're not doing it. They just keep making announcements and then they back away from it.

I think we had one person hired and they lost that person so they're flip-flopping all the time and - you got enough people working up in the backroom of the Premier's office. You should be able to find somebody up there to give them something to do.

First of all, I don't know why they don't listen to the business community. Because I think I often heard the Premier and the minister of environment, over the years, indicate that the private sector was the economic engine in this province. That's the one that creates the jobs, but they're not communicating with them. They're not working with them to create more jobs. They're just increasing the EDA budget and putting people to work like that, and that's unfortunate, but it's - they have to put in place the red tape review that they promised to offer some encouragement for the private sector in this province so that they'll stay here, make investments and drive our economy.

I encourage the government and I ask them to start this process, do a relationship with the private sector to reduce the burden that's on them and work with the business community to allow them to grow and prosper.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Premier Ghiz: Great speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: I call on the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir to second the motion.

Premier Ghiz: Here we go.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure tonight to second this motion on red tape review.

As my colleague before me mentioned when he was talking, that \$114 million - these are heavy regulations costs to our workers here and our businesses in the province.

As we know when this government was coming into power, the Premier was going to do this red tape review right away. He went out and he hired a person and he got the person there and they were there a short period of time and they said: I can't deal with you guys. I quit. Walked away from the job. They lost their red tape review person that they were going to put there. They left the position.

So then they hired another person, and apparently after working with them - apparently got out on stress leave - not much wonder. Then they hired another person, and

then she's gone - that individual's gone.

Ms. Dunsford: What happened to them?

Mr. Bagnall: Now they've got nobody doing it. That's been the history of this government, is they tell you they're going to do something, but they never ever do it. They never follow through.

One of the things is - you remember this afternoon in the House, the Premier was going to bring in this fancy bill when he was sitting across here. A Bill 101, where he was going to make all these changes. So the advertisement of government - well, guess what? He took that bill and he stuck in the shredder as soon as he became government and said: Nope. He says: This is the way that I can advertise for my party through the government and the government pays for it. So that's what he's doing. So that's what you talk about when we're looking at try to get things with red tape reviewed.

Can you just imagine, the \$114 million that it's costing -

Premier Ghiz: It'd be a good job for you.

Mr. Bagnall: - businesses.

Premier Ghiz: It'd be a good job for you.

Mr. D. Currie: After the next election.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Order, please.

The member is speaking.

Mr. Bagnall: I can understand why the Premier would want to buy me off. He doesn't want a -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Premier offering me jobs to sit down? My gracious Premier. I can't believe - I thought you said there was going to be no patronage around here. There you are offering jobs for me to leave this House. Can you imagine that?

Well, Mr. Premier, up the offer.

Anyway, Mr. Premier, this is - can you just imagine if we had that \$114 million put in small businesses' hands? They say that this paperwork and all these things are costing them as far as time -

Premier Ghiz: Give us some examples.

Mr. Bagnall: - staff and labour.

An Hon. Member: Your leader wants more red tape. She wants everything (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: What I can't believe in is that the Premier is saying: Give us examples. Because it was his legislation or his campaign promise that he was going to do this: I've already checked this all out, I know exactly what we can do for this red tape review, until I get elected, and then I forget all about it. I completely forget about it.

The CFIB, they work really hard with small businesses across the province. They're a great organization, they're a great group. If you could get 10 to 25% reductions from the \$114 million, we would have anywhere from \$11 to 29 million in savings that the businesses could use. The minister probably knows this. He knows all the answers in the finance, so I know he knows this, that this 11 to 29 million would be good to put into businesses' hands. He knows that. He knows that if he put that 11 to 29 million in businesses' hands, he's going to get it back in spades, because they're going to reinvest, they're going to buy, they're going to have - as a matter of fact, it would be one of the

best stimulus programs that we could ever do, by putting this into effect, that wouldn't cost government money. It just makes things a lot easier and saves businesses money.

If you can save businesses money, they will reinvest that money back in the community and back in the province, then it's a great stimulus package. It's super.

Mr. MacKinley: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: I know you wouldn't understand, minister of transportation. I know you wouldn't understand anything about that. So I can understand that. If you could just cut back on some of these regulations and all the red tape process that they have and just streamline.

Premier Ghiz: Burger King's a great small business.

Mr. Bagnall: And streamline all - he'd love to get up and speak, but he knows you would slap his fingers if he got up there without being asked. So he's won't get up. He won't get up because he knows you'll slap his fingers if he does. He won't get up.

We could actually be saving government - you could actually end up saving government money. It's valuable human relations and fiscal resources that all of this could help. It could save and it could help business. Why would we want to not do something that's going to help small business that's really not going to cost government any money?

You know, 78% of a survey done by CFIB -

An Hon. Member: What does it stand for?

Mr. Bagnall: I know you fellows wouldn't understand. If you don't know, that's fine.

An Hon. Member: What does it stand for?

Mr. Bagnall: Canadian Federation of Independent Business is what it stands for.

Premier Ghiz: Ah, there you go.

Mr. Bagnall: So if you don't know - you promised red tape review - I think you'd know the facts.

But anyway, 78 % of the people said that if simplifying - just make the regulations simpler so that they can understand it. They don't have to take all this kind of time following through on the regulations, going checking what this means. That's what the businesspeople are telling us that we need to do.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: If you fellows want to make fun of the business community, then that's fine. I've got no problem with that. You can make fun of them all you want. But the facts are 78% of the business community in the province say that they need to get things simpler.

Sixty-four per cent said that the regulations aren't being communicated clearly to them, that they don't understand, and 57 % said improving government customer service is another way to save money. They're saying that if they can get all of these things together it's going to help drastically.

Fifty per cent say providing examples of what constitutes compliance would help. They want to know what the effects of the act are going to do to them. What the effects of putting the regulations in effect - how it's going to work, what they have to do. In simple terms, in layman's terms, where they can understand it without having to go through a lawyer and get it all checked out. That's really a concern that the business community has.

Another 47% stated that there should be compliance audits - and did not lead to mandatory fines. So what they're saying is instead of putting fines in place for business for not getting the work done before, that they should be out auditing and showing the business that: Listen, you're not doing this right, here's how you do it properly. Save them from getting a fine or save them from having to pay exorbitant interest rates that are put on by the government if they owe money and their fines are there. Their percentage rates are drastic for a small business. So what they're saying is, instead of always fining -

Premier Ghiz: Did we put that on or did you?

Mr. Bagnall: Listen -

Premier Ghiz: We promised that.

Mr. Bagnall: You're the one that promised you were going to take it away and didn't.

Mr. MacKinley: We eliminated (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: You're the one that promised you were going to do a review here and you haven't. You're the one that's supposed to change this and you haven't. Actually, you probably came out under the Liberal government back in the early 1990s or 1980s, or who knows what government, but it's been there. But you said you were going to change it. You said you were going to do it.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: You didn't. I know that.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: I can understand -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: No, I'm not complaining. I'm saying you said you were going to do it and you haven't done it.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: And 43% stated that improving timelines and decision making by regulations would be a positive step. So they're saying, improve the time lines, be a great step to move forward, and I agree. I mean, I was in small business a number of years before I got into politics, and the paper -

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: You probably were. I probably had to keep an eye on you, too. Anyway, to make a long story short -

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - in a small business a thing that used to really annoy me in the business is collecting sales tax. We have to do it. Every small business has to do it.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: What really annoyed me was that when I collected sales tax I would get paid 3% for doing all the paperwork, up until they gave me \$500 -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) did that?

Mr. Bagnall: It's been in - actually, I think it was a Liberal government that brought that in.

An Hon. Member: Which government?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Anyway -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - the problem with that is after three months of the year, or after four months of the year, you don't get anything. The 3%, you're over the 3%, and there's no money coming back to the business, so they're doing all that work for the government, collecting all their taxes, doing the paperwork, doing the collecting of the thing, and then the first time that you make a mistake, they send in an auditor, and the auditor comes in and he checks the thing, and he says: Oh, oh, you missed a day here.

So they find out what the tax would be, maybe \$600, \$700, and then they turn around and they charge you 27% interest or something, and they go back a period of time, instead of saying: We realize you've been working here, but now we're going to penalize you. We want you to do all the paperwork for us, and if you don't do it exactly right, then we're going to fine you for not doing it right. That's what businesses are finding it really difficult about, and they find that really hard to make up.

Another 24% stated that they would find that if they would put more online services on that would be a really positive step. If they would go to the Internet and put on all of the forms that you would need in business and put them on the Internet where you can flick a switch and get it all, and get all the information immediately, that would be a real positive step to move forward.

But that hasn't happened yet, but I'm looking forward to that. Maybe if I'm here another 20 years I may see it, but anyway.

Further, to put into perspective the importance of business, if they could just save that money that they're spending on all this extra paperwork and all this extra investment, just think of the positiveness on this. If you could be taking that money that

you would save, and you could be investing it into equipment, and expansion.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Guess who would get good advantage from that? The government, because they would be charging you sales tax on the equipment, and if it was an expansion, there would be more volume, improved business, more sales tax. It works both ways. That red tape review, when I think about this and when I look at it is, it's a great way for having things done that's not going to cost the government money. It saves money for the business, and if you can save money for the business, and they have extra money to do this investment and move forward in, then it's a great positive step. They can use it for paying down the debt. I mean, if they owed government money and they can't pay their loans, and if they can save money and pay down their loans to government or pay down their loans to anybody, so they can afford to make payments, then that's another positive step.

Another positive step is nearly all employees have wages, and I can tell you, if you're an employer and you have good staff, you want to be able to pay them as much as you possibly can, as much as your business will allow you to pay. Because to get good staff and to keep good staff you have to be able to pay a decent price in order to keep them. If you don't, you won't be able to keep your staff. So that's a part of what you have to do.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: That's a part of what you have to do. So if we could get this into (Indistinct) we could have more money, the business in their hands, that maybe they could pay their staff a little bit more.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: But maybe they could also add benefits to the program where maybe they don't have now. They could add a benefit program to their employees with the money they could save on this red tape. That would be another benefit of being able to save money, increasing.

You can convert your savings into profit. Another way that the business could make money if they had some money saved because of all the extra red tape that they didn't have to do, and they didn't have the cost -

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - and then you could have employees - they're spending all this time doing the paperwork, and doing the red tape stuff - you could have them out on the floor maybe selling product, or having something else that they're bringing in more money for the company, which in turn helps them down the road.

So these are all things that can help a business because of the red tape review.

Hiring more staff, that's another one. We talked about increasing employee wages and benefits. You could hire more staff if your business is more profitable. If you can save money and put your business more profitable, you can hire more employees. You can expand and hire, and this would be a great (Indistinct).

Another thing is Islanders are probably the most generous people in the world. Businesses in PEI - and I can vouch as a business owner - every time there's a benefit, or any time there's any kind of a fundraiser going on in the community, or around, as a business person you get people coming and expecting you to give a donation, which people do. But if your business was more profitable the donations

would be bigger and you would do every bit you can to help people. Anybody in business, they do really work hard to help communities, they do really work hard to help the charities, they work hard to support all the fundraisers in their communities, and these things will all benefit from doing a red tape review.

If you're in a business and your profits are good, imagine a company today decreasing prices because they're profitable and doing that. This could happen. I mean, it's tough to say, but any of these things could happen by doing a red tape review. It's good that way. Businesses in this province could do almost all of these things I just talked about if they had more profit and they had the resources to do it. Not to mention all the extra time that would be saved, and the resources that government would get. Government would end up making more money on taxes by doing this than you could shake a stick at.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: The answer to that question is I was in business 30-some years and it was in then. Ever since I've been in government that \$500 has been there.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Ever since I've been in business, since 1968, and it was there then.

An Hon. Member: Thirty years, and it was 3% when I started -

Mr. Bagnall: Yes. You're right, it is 3%. That's what I'm saying. It never changed. Tell them to change that. You can't go - you know, can you imagine sitting with a business 30 years and not making a change, what would happen? You wouldn't be here today.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: No. There has to be some changes made. There has to be changes made to help the businesses across this province.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) the Premier (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, you know, you've got to put a human face on all of this. We have to bring in - the Premier admits that he was going to have somebody brought in to do a red tape review. You know, I've got to give him credit, he did get one person there, and he actually got three people there over a period of time, but they're not there now. Nobody's done the job. Nobody has followed through.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) man for the job.

Mr. Bagnall: Nobody's followed through, Premier.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Nobody's followed through, and after the last person has left -

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - you still haven't put anybody there since that last person has left, and they've been gone quite a while.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: We need to do a lot of work on this red tape review in order to make it happen. Three-quarters of the people that are surveyed in small business say this is one of the most stressful things in their business they have to do because they can never find out, and when they call about something they have to - they're put on hold -

Mr. M. Currie: Yes.

Mr. Bagnall: - and then all of a sudden somebody comes back and says: You'll have to check with my supervisor, so they give you another number, and then you go to them and they say: I'll have to talk to somebody else. So they give you another number. You get the runaround, and in order to find something, sometimes it takes a day, a day and a half. If you're in a business, you could have it all completed by that time if you could get the answers that you need, you know?

Another thing, two-thirds of the people that work in business say that this takes a lot of time away from their family time, where they're working at trying to find all these regulations and follow through on them. So they take away from family and being with friends, and it's difficult. Half state that they spend significant time on regulations outside regular office hours. They can't get it all done during regular office hours, so they go home at night and they have to continue to still work on it, and they still can't find out any answers. So it takes a lot of time.

I think that we have to move forward and bring these regulations in as fast and as quickly as possible. Government could be encouraging services standards across all departments, for dealing with the public. If you do that -

Mr. M. Currie: They're not doing (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: If you do that, it would save so much time for individuals coming in trying to find out what has to be done and where they have to get it.

Mr. M. Currie: They're not talking (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: I know the Premier thinks it's a good idea, and I know he supports this, because he talked about it. I think he even

had it in one of his throne speeches where they're hiring an individual to get this work done. Well -

Mr. M. Currie: Yes, broken promise.

Mr. Bagnall: - the work is not getting done and the person that was hired left because he wasn't getting any satisfaction or help, so you have to do more than just say. You have to do something. And this has not happened.

My colleague listed some red tape trimming ideas for 2010 that the CFIB advocated. They advocated, and I'll read these, too: the CFIB advocates a 10 point plan on overall performance to reform. Number one was measure the regulatory burden. Without measurement there can be no true accountability. Measuring the regulatory burden is not an easy task, since much of the cost of regulation is hidden, indirect or intangible.

Premier Ghiz: Define intangible.

Mr. Bagnall: I think that's one you can figure out yourself.

However, the first measure does not have to be perfect. We can work and improve it after we get it in place. For example, there has to be some work over time to get it rounded out to a perfect program.

But I think what we have to do, you have to stop because there are so many hidden and indirect costs that are there for government that the businesses aren't - on dealing with.

Number two, legislate the measure by reporting it regularly to the public. So you got to make sure that you regulate. Real accountability requires ongoing measurements. So you can set up the program and you can have real accountability, and that real accountability, we can measure that from what's happening.

We look forward to seeing that.

Measurement should be reported in such a way that they will survive beyond the government that the initial enthusiasm about the service. So that means that you got to follow what you say you're going to do and put it in effect.

For example, legislating this reporting requirement would allow a regulatory burden be tracked over time. By putting it in place you'd be able to track the cost, you'd be able to track where you're saving time, you'd be able to put all these things in, and you could come up with figures that would substantiate what the CFIB are telling us. We can do that.

Impose constraints on regulations. Businesses and individuals have limited time and money to cope with regulations. If regulators want the rules followed, they must recognize these limits and impose more restraint on their own regulating.

Suggested initiatives include a requirement on the part of government to reduce a regulatory requirement for every new requirement included, cap and trade, and introduce criteria to justify the need of new and existing regulations.

That would make sure that there are no regulations that are going to be brought in that are going to put into effect unless you have studied what these regulations are going to do and what effects they're going to have on business. That's important because businesses continue to get regulated to death.

Make regulators accountable, a political priority, and appoint a minister responsible. So they're saying that this Red Tape Review is most important to them and so important that they think that they should be a minister made responsible for the Red Tape Review.

I think that is really good that the government would (Indistinct) and make sure that this gets done and followed through.

Regulations have a serious impact on the economy, yet politically it is often a low-profile issue. Politically, to a political party this Red Tape Review doesn't seem like a big issue. But when you go out to the public and you go out to the business community around PEI and even further, it is a big issue and it has been a big issue for a number of years. It's an issue that - I'll be the first to admit, it probably should have been addressed years and years ago, but it hasn't. That's the problem, it hasn't. The government that I was in didn't address it at the time and this government is not addressing it. But the problem is they made a commitment to do it and it just hasn't gone that way.

But if you put a Cabinet minister level position be created to deal with this, it would get done.

In the case of municipal governments, a permanent standing committee - a style body - should be put in place. They have the task of seeing over the ongoing review of regulations that deal with this thing. So you'd have a committee in place that would be looking at how it's been put into place and how it's going to be followed after it's in place and that no changes can be made without it properly going through. You could have a place on that seat for elected officials so he could be there to keep an eye on what's going on from the Cabinet position. So this would be make it open, accountable and it would have government involved in what's actually taking place and what the community businesses are saying across the province. So it would look like it was actually happening.

The onus should be on creating new rules to

ensure effective communication for all of these rules. So what they're saying is there are going to be changes made, but you got to have communication in place to let the businesses know that these changes are taking place, how you can deal with the issues and how you can move forward. By putting a communication person and getting the information to the businesses across the province, this will save them money, this will make them more profitable.

Anything to make a business more profitable today is important. Because we have a lot of businesses - as the previous member said, I think we had the highest bankruptcies in North America right here in this province in the last two years, 259%, I think bankruptcies. Maybe if we could keep half of those people in business our tax base would go up and we would have more dollars coming into our provincial treasury.

It is entirely reasonable for business owners to expect government agencies to provide straightforward and consistent advice regarding regulation compliance in a timely manner. All they're asking for is giving advice to tell you that in a time that doesn't go by too long, and when they do find out they're being charged penalties and fines for not complying when they really didn't know how they were supposed to comply. That's what is happening. One other thing is they have to make sure that everything is in plain English that business people will understand.

Number six, focus on areas that will be most economically productive. So they tell you: Get out there and make the changes first that somewhere where it is going to be economically responsible for the businesses to maximize the economic impact of regulation reduction exercises, policy makers should focus on areas of regulation and red tape considered most harmful to the business. So you got to deal with those

issues first.

Carefully consider the needs for all new regulations and the impact that they will have on small business. Which is what I have been saying all along.

Any proposed regulations should be subject to scrutiny and include questioning where regulations are needed, ensuring the effects that parties are consulted with, and unintended consequences of the regulations are considered.

So even though you put regulations in, you have to make sure that they're doing what you want to do, but also that they're not putting it on a burden on the small business community also. So you have to take them altogether and lay them out and deal with it to make sure that everything is happening.

Guidelines should be considering - new regulations should be regularly monitored by a third party to ensure that they are being adhered to - these are all great suggestions by the CFIB - keeping compliance flexible and provide basic examples and guidelines for what constitutes compliance and non-compliance. Very simple, but it's hard to get done.

Regulations works best when it is outcome-based. Anytime you put regulations in for business and when it's outcome based rather than prescriptive in nature, that's the best way to have it. This allows businesses to find the most cost-effective ways to comply with the rules.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I feel so lonely, I feel like the Maytag repair man tonight, all alone here.

Just finding that these regulations can be changed. I know that other provinces have gone forward on the red tape review and they're not all completely finished, but they're working on them and the business community are saying that they are saving a lot of money. I asked a question: Are they saving as much as what you thought they were going to save by doing all these reviews? And the answer that came back was: No, they're not. But there are savings and there is substantial savings, but it's not - what they've had done, it's not meeting the expectations that they thought they would.

So to say, when I was talking earlier, that it was going to save all that money, if it only saves half that amount of money it would help the business. Any amount of savings is a help and that's what we have to be looking for.

In closing, I want to restate the importance of the issue. These are small easy steps that the government can take to reduce the burden on small business in this province. It will do wonders for those businesses once some of the burdens have been lifted. Government has a unique chance to allow PEI to become one of the most competitive places in the world to do business in the country.

Government can take a leadership role in the province in term of reducing the amount of red tape that businesses need to cut through. As such, I urge all the members of the House to support this motion.

But I still go back to say - a very prominent businessman has probably done as much construction and as much development in this province as anybody, Tim Banks. Tim Banks has articles in the paper and he's been complaining for a number of years about all the red tape that they have to do in order to do a development or whatever to move forward.

Premier Ghiz: He's successful.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, he is a successful businessman and a good businessman. There's no question about that. But you know what? It drives him crazy, the red tape in this province -

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - of all of it that they have to do. It drives him crazy that he has to spend so much time running around and getting permits and getting environmental assessments and getting all of this stuff done for development that you have to do. He's probably been one of the most prominent Islanders speaking against red tape - that nothing's being done. Because he believes that this has to be done, and if people are going to be developers and expand, that they must bring this forward.

Now I know, and as I said before, the Premier has tried - there's no question. There have been three people hired in this position and none of them have stayed. But, I mean, every time they leave we have to get them replaced. They may have somebody there now, but there wasn't when I checked out.

If they do, I give him them credit, because it has to go forward. I think the Premier is on the same wavelength as we are, that this is something that we have to do for small business. If we can do this and help any small business in this province be more successful, then we should do it.

Premier Ghiz: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: Will it cost money to get this up and going? Yes, it will. But once it's there, it will make money for government in the years to come and into the future. Because there will be savings and -

Speaker: Sorry to interrupt. If you don't mind, for a recognition.

Mr. Bagnall: No, sure. Go ahead.

An Hon. Member: He wanted a breath.

Mr. Bagnall: Everybody can recognize.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier for recognition of guests.

Mr. Webster: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a privilege to rise here in the House and introduce David and Marie Webster who are Alicia's mother and father. They've joined us tonight for the proceedings. I'd like to recognize them.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

You may continue, hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Premier Ghiz: Making lots of money - don't forget to charge him rent.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

You know, I forget where I was. I'm going to have to start all over again.

Speaker: Sorry about that.

Mr. Bagnall: So I'll start from the beginning again. No. I'm just on the closing, and I know that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has been a great driving force behind trying to get this red tape review for small business across the province.

They've worked at it. They've been preaching it, they've been doing everything trying to make this happen. They've been getting surveys done, getting all their information in place on this issues. I have to say that they've done a great job on that. I want to congratulate them for their effort in lobbying government and trying to move this issue forward.

All the lobbying in the world and all the talking in the world will not do anything unless we act. I'm asking the Premier to get another person in place if he hasn't already. If he has, congratulations to him. But if he hasn't, I say: Get somebody in place.

Premier Ghiz: I'll (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: The small business community are watching the Premier on this issue. They are expecting him to act on it, and I know he will.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

The hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Mr. MacKinley: You know, Madam Speaker, this is a worthwhile resolution that's come to the Table, but it's funny, every time the Tories get up, when they're not in power -

An Hon. Member: They've left the building.

Mr. MacKinley: I know. When they're not in power they always have great ideas, so they seem to think, but they could never implement them when they were there.

An Hon. Member: You're right.

Mr. MacKinley: That's the difference -

An Hon. Member: We'll get her done.
We'll get her done.

Mr. MacKinley: - between the Liberal and Conservative parties. We get things done.

Premier Ghiz: Can do. Can do.

Mr. MacKinley: There's not really that much really different between the two parties except the Liberal Party - and that's one of the reasons I joined the Liberal Party and ran for them. The Liberal Party gets things done. The PC party talks about it but never gets it done.

Premier Ghiz: That's right. Facts.

Mr. MacKinley: Not the minister, the Member from -

An Hon. Member: Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. MacKinley: - Georgetown-St. Peters was minister of highways for a number of years. What did he do? He fired 800 people, \$8 million, brought in more investigations than you could shake a stick at.

Ms. Sherry: How many was it?

Mr. MacKinley: But that's - no, that's enough. Everybody know about that. But that's what they did. The member from - got into Cabinet later in life, and what did he do? He did nothing.

An Hon. Member: Fell asleep (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: He did nothing, absolutely nothing, but go on - until, well, you know I'd like to do it but I can't get Cabinet to support me on it. He was useless in Cabinet, I guess.

So, analysis. No what we've done in *Highway Traffic Act* has been there - I alluded to it there today earlier. Under the *Highway Traffic Act*, it hasn't been reviewed since 1973. If you get out around your community and listen to the police officers, there are sections of this review we did that the RCMP will say, or the city police, that they could spend more time trying to figure out what section of the act to charge somebody under than actually catch the person and charge them. Because that government over there did nothing when they were in power but put their heads in the sand.

The *Highway Traffic Act* is a component of the Prince Edward Island legislation and it takes a wide description. The act at this present time is 164 pages. It has 33 regulations and references 23 other provincial acts. This is just using this as an example. So what I've done, is - people that get things done.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: Like our youth are here today. They go to school, they go to high school, they go on to college, and of course we have the brightest of them in here as Pages and they (Indistinct) because they get things done. That's what they do. They get things done.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: And (Indistinct) getting things done they can even come here and spend some time here in the Legislative Assembly.

So what did I do? I called for analysis. Conduct a review of the *Highway Traffic Act*. Determining the issues of enforcement, etc. Develop and consider a set of (Indistinct) to the revised act based on feedback from other provincial jurisdictions

across Canada. Listen to, and act on, the stakeholders, such as our police forces here in the Province of Prince Edward Island, such as our courts and systems. This report is meant to outline the findings of the stakeholder interview and identify from the readers any feedback introducing suggestions for a change. I'm talking about getting rid of red tape.

Amendment alters - provide feedback and (Indistinct) identified with the department of transportation and public works and approaches that we should do by working with employees by working with the stakeholders and coming and eliminating highway red tape.

This government here is doing something under the leadership of our great Premier. This government's doing something. That government had 10 or 11 years - they did absolutely nothing. Nothing. So what do we do? We provide a recommended approach to revising the *Highway Traffic Act*. Provide an implement plan - which they wouldn't know about.

Ms. Bertram: An implementation plan, really?

Mr. MacKinley: Including the approach that might be taken in revision of any acts to eliminate red tape. The stakeholders were people from our department. We don't have to go hire a whole bunch of consultants like Nova Scotia did and spend about a million dollars reviewing our act. We had people quite capable here in the province - of doing it here - in the Province of Prince Edward Island, because our party has got faith in Islanders. That's what we've done.

People such as John MacDonald, Graham Minor, Doug MacEwen; people's interview were Shawn Flynn, Sherry Gillis; people from the Attorney General's office; people from the RCMP and police forces, like

Richard Collins, Charlottetown Police Force, Dave Griffin, deputy chief in Summerside, Louis Sutherland, Borden-Kensington police, Sgt. Gary MacLeod, highway patrol, which has just been promoted to a new job over there. There'll be somebody taking over that job. He did such a great job he got promoted. And Corporal MacNeill of the highway patrol.

Premier Ghiz: We're doing security. He's going to be my bodyguard and do IT security.

Mr. MacKinley: Other people that were interviewed were people such as - and this is to eliminate the red tape. Other people that were interviewed were such people as Gerard Quinn, Valerie Moore -

Ms. Bertram: Women.

Mr. MacKinley: Former councillor of the highway division. I can go on and on. Other provinces we looked into.

So here's what I'm just going to - I think this is a good resolution, but it's too bad they didn't act on it when they were there.

Premier Ghiz: Yes.

Mr. MacKinley: That's what their problem was. This is a government that acts.

So when you look at the regulations and what we put together here is things that are telling you how much red tape there is. If you go through here - and I'll just quote from the RCMP and municipal police force representing how they became involved and how unclear the wording of the act is, red tape. They pointed to rules of the road section, equipment section, including lighting requirements, limitation, after-market editions of vehicles, windshields, etc. Often stated that they often spent time on the side of the road, more time consulting

with dispatch to determine the exact meaning of a section so they lay the most appropriate charge.

We're going to come out with one handbook, which they have now. One handbook -

Premier Ghiz: So you're eliminating red tape?

Mr. MacKinley: I'm eliminating red tape in the department of highways.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKinley: We're eliminating it and we're going to do it in a cooperative way with our police force, with the varying knowledge of people in my department, etc. Because we have confidence in Islanders. We have confidence in the RCMP and city police that are working here.

Ms. Bertram: Everyone's safety, too.

Mr. MacKinley: So, you know what? The SOT handbook, both the RCMP and Summerside police also indicated the SOT handbook is the main source in the patrol car, is meant to be quick reference to provide legislation but, in some cases, is a hindrance to them. It's a hindrance to them because there's three or four or even as much as 10 different ways to charge somebody under the *Highway Traffic Act*, especially if you get new officers coming in from outside the province and they got this handbook. Somebody turns left and it's only a right turn.

You know what? These are things that this government never did. But we're going to simplify it. So our police force - I think we're paying the RCMP something like 12 million a year? Twelve million dollars a year. You don't want people that's costing us \$12 million a year sitting on the side of

the road, trying to figure out 20 different ways to charge somebody. Let's make it simple so they can get on with the job and cut out the red tape. There's more than just cutting out red tape for businesses, which is good, there's cutting out red tape for our enforcement officers. There's cutting out red tape all over the province. That's what we have put together.

Premier Ghiz: From one end to the other.

Mr. MacKinley: One Island Community.

If you talk to the Crown prosecutors, it makes it very hard to prosecute some of these in court. So we're tying up the court time. More red tape.

We're a government of action. Like the gentleman over there from Montague-Kilmuir. The hon. gentleman. But anyway, he was hon. one time but today he's not. He's not the leader yet. Then we'll have to call him honourable.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) be the leader or the red tape commissioner.

Mr. MacKinley: Madam Speaker, when you look at this, if you go out with Doug MacEwen, the safety coordinator, who used to be the chief of staff for the Premier - look at the mess he had to work with, with the red tape and everything.

He's very happy to get in with a government now that's doing something rather than just talking about it. He had an awful job when he worked on the fifth floor with the Premier and them, trying to keep the Cabinet in line, because all they wanted to do was golf most of the time. If they weren't golfing, they wanted to complain. If they weren't complaining, they wanted to go driving, sightseeing. This is what they were doing.

But introducing this legislation is going to take time because, as I said today in the House, the amendments I made on the bicycle races is an act - just wait now, it's an act.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacKinley: See, they don't understand yet. I can't believe it.

Anyway, under the *Highway Traffic Act*, I'm talking about, that particular section is there. So in order to eliminate it you got to take all those acts back to the House to eliminate them. So you got to eliminate it. See, they don't - that's why they couldn't do anything. They're too busy out there for young people racing bicycles. I'd say they played cops and cops on the weekend with the Cabinet ministers' credit cards and then they went chasing young kids, seeing if they can catch anybody bicycling and racing.

In order to clean up a bill you got to take that section of that act back to the House and delete it. That's what you got to do. That is actually - was an act, the original act and now it is deleted because we brought it to the floor. But this is what we've got to do and I'm going to ask for the cooperation from the opposition when I come back with a whole bunch of these double amendments and that to delete them. I want proper ratios. I hope I don't have to go through the same thing, trying to explain them. I think what I will suggest in some of the suggestions is that we give them a week to sit down with Shawn Flynn and just go over how (Indistinct) that worked, just to help them out.

Maybe the Clerk of the House or the Speaker would buy them their dinner and that.

Speaker: Anything else you'd like to say on the motion, hon. minister?

Mr. MacKinley: Yes, this is eliminating red tape.

By taking them in and getting them through the act, that will help us eliminate the red tape and the paperwork when we come to the House here. That's what I'm trying to do.

We are the ones that brought in cell phones act amendments. We're the ones that brought in so many - let me think, now, what we did bring in. It's more easier to say what we didn't do then what we did.

What did we do? We brought in that if anybody blows 5%, they automatically lose their license for seven days - 5% on the breathalyzer - .05 and they automatically lose their license. You guys wouldn't do that. No, you wouldn't do that.

Premier Ghiz: What rank did MADD give you?

Mr. MacKinley: MADD, we came from 11 under the Tories to third in less than two and a half years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKinley: Two and a half years. What did you guys do? Nothing. You just shoved it under the table.

Speaker: Let's stick on to the motion. Stay on the motion, hon. member.

Mr. MacKinley: Red tape.

Mr. Bagnall: Great information we're getting.

Mr. MacKinley: Yeah, you're getting it. You need it. You could use it. Because you guys had the problem with red tape when you were there. You never tried to correct it.

Ms. Dunsford: You don't like red.

Mr. MacKinley: Until you have a problem recognizing the problem -

Premier Ghiz: Blue tape.

Ms. Bertram: Blue tape.

Mr. MacKinley: - you got to correct it. And what do you do? When you have a problem, if you don't address the problem, you come back and then you whine later on when another government gets in there because you didn't know that you had a problem when you were there because you were too busy being tied up in red tape or something. I don't know what you were doing.

Stakeholders in this review agreed that the problem occurred because there's too much room for interpretation in the act. So, each situation, two people may interpret the act differently. Well, that's red tape.

Then when it gets to the prosecutor - because all the law enforcement do is enforce acts that we put through here. Of course (Indistinct) later on. That's just the way they are.

So, you know -

Premier Ghiz: But he was more - he was very knowledgeable.

Mr. MacKinley: The acts and regulations - this is your government that was in - should be subject to interpretation and such and (Indistinct) of these (Indistinct) should be made clear. They should be made clear is what they should be. So with that I'm just going to get up and support - no, I'm going to support it. I don't have to talk here all night. The message is loud and clear. We're doing something, you guys talk about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Would anyone else like to speak to the motion?

The hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs.

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

What more could I say than what my hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal has added already tonight to this motion? It is amazing the work that is being done in that transportation department in a short three years -

An Hon. Member: Eleven years of neglect. Two and a half years of cleaning up.

Mr. Sheridan: - it just amazes me the red tape that they have cut through, it is incredible.

But I'll talk about another type of red tape, and that has to do with the small business community. I just wanted to clear up a few points that we have talked about here earlier this evening with regard to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business - that's CFIB - and Erin McGrath-Gaudet, who's the representative of that here on Prince Edward Island.

Premier Ghiz: Gave us a B+, I think. Didn't we get a B+ (Indistinct)?

Mr. Sheridan: That's the most interesting part, Mr. Premier, is that Erin McGrath-Gaudet has been watching this government for some time now.

Premier Ghiz: B+.

Mr. Sheridan: They had issues with how this province was motoring along for the

past 11 years, and really disliked the way that red tape was stalled here in this province. So, when they have come forward, we've talked to them on several occasions, and inside this year's budget she was very impressed, as was their Canadian leader, and sent us a note with that regard. When they did that, they sent us a grade of B, the top in the Atlantic region.

Premier Ghiz: They're watching us all the time.

Mr. Sheridan: They had spoken about the things that we have done. They talked very readily about how small business here in PEI appreciate the fact that we were going to reduce our deficit inside this one calendar year by almost 43%, the biggest drop in Canada with regards to deficits from last year to this.

As well, they wanted to see a plan so that we would get to a balanced budget, and we have shown that after three years we will be there, at a balanced budget. They loved that fact. Small business loves that.

But what she was most impressed with was us bringing forward the BizPal system that allows small business to go online and cut through all of the red tape that you have to do with regard to cutting across all government departments. Now you can go on BizPal, we have joined, and that's what the first person who was in charge of our red tape review was able to strike. So the BizPal allows you to go in and follow through with your registration number and do many things right across our governmental regime.

I'm very proud to say that with this individual leaving our employ, heading off to greener pastures to help the Ontario government do exactly what we've done down here, we have now replaced her with a young man and he is doing a tremendous job, and has an intern now working with him

to ensure that this cut through red tape continues on into the future. This is great news for Prince Edward Island.

But when small business talks to us, the first thing that they talk to us about is the continuation in the drop in the small business corporate income tax rate. This year this government is going to be able to drop it to the lowest measure in all of Canada. We will be at 1.5% corporate income tax for our small businesses.

What's even more impressive than that is that we thought it wasn't catching enough Island businesses, so we decided to up the threshold by \$100,000. So we're taking it this year from \$500,000 for a threshold to \$600,000, allowing that many more small businesses to qualify for the 1.5% corporate income tax rate.

As we know, we have a very high, large corporate income rate, and we wanted more businesses to qualify for the small. We have got nothing but great letters of thanks -

Premier Ghiz: We put the threshold up.

Mr. Sheridan: You're darn right. We have gotten at least 17 written thanks -

Premier Ghiz: Come on over.

Mr. Sheridan: - for doing it. We are very proud of that fact.

We have to go to the nominee program. With regard to the Provincial Nominee Program, I'd like to say that it is the one program that these two parties have worked very well together on. The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters initiated this full program back in 2001, a wonderful program that allowed this province to prosper, and with their support we have been able to keep this province out of an actual recession.

Every time we talk about PNP we have to talk about what that investment is, and that's a private investor coming from another country of this world, wanting to come and settle in the greatest country of this world, and, of course, allowing them to come to the greatest province within this great country. When they do that, they bring their money with them and invest in a private enterprise here in Prince Edward Island. A private corporation that they fit who they are, found one for the other, private money coming in to invest in a private company here.

Working together with the opposition through all of this, I know they were highly supportive of it, and we appreciate it -

Premier Ghiz: There's two here, anyway.

Mr. Sheridan: - and the two members that are here tonight were great proponents of this program, and allow our companies here on PEI to prosper. I would have to say that this is the greatest single program for small business in the history of Prince Edward Island -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sheridan: - bringing hundreds of millions of dollars into this province. That influx of cash allowed this province, the only one in Canada, to stay out of actual recession over this past two years -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sheridan: - of downturn in the worldwide economy. The only province, the only jurisdiction in this country that could stay out of actual recession. That PNP, along with our investment in the capital projects, were the whole reason why we were able to do that. We were the only jurisdiction in Canada that showed growth through the last fiscal year at .5% growth. No other jurisdiction in Canada did that.

The Conference Board of Canada stated it very clearly, that it was because of our capital budget that we came out with as the first jurisdiction in North America to do that. We knew that stimulus was going to be needed to get us through this downturn, and this capital stimulus budget, along with the PNP projects, allowed us to stay on the upper side of the docket side.

Housing starts in all of Canada for the past two fiscal years, we led on a per capita basis. We also led the nation in the past two years in per capita with new car sales. What that says about private business here in Prince Edward Island is the fact that with our capital spending stimulus plan every business from a one-man plumbing operation to the largest road building company in PEI flourished during this last two years with all the work that we put on the board.

Some of the things that we've done over this past two years: 23 bridges are inside the \$500 million capital budget that the Premier spoke about earlier, thousands of kilometres of new pavement -

Mr. MacKinley: Oh!

Mr. Sheridan: - from an infrastructure -

An Hon. Member: Road building.

Mr. Sheridan: - that was decimated over the past 11 years. The whole backbone of this province was dropping on its belly. It was just incredible, the work that's been done by the hon. member. It's just incredible, the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Five new schools, 150 school buses, five new manors, two hospital renovations, a medical centre, a jail renovation, and that employs over a thousand Islanders in net new jobs, each of these five years of our

capital spending. I'll tell you, small business applauds us every time they hear those numbers.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, I would love to say that we will continue our red tape review, continue to impress the CFIB, and we'll continue to have some of the brightest minds in Prince Edward Island working on this project.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Premier Ghiz: I would.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise this evening in support of this motion, because this is one of the areas that we identified as being an issue. Now, having said that, red tape is also important. You need to make sure that businesses out there are following environmental guidelines. Whether or not we're talking about infrastructure projects that are underway in the province, making sure that they follow the proper guidelines to protect our water in the province, to protect our viewscapes in the province, all of those things are very important when it comes to infrastructure projects.

When it comes to, for example, restaurants, some may complain but it's also important to make sure that there's guidelines in place to make sure that our food is protected, to make sure that the way they prepare the food is proper to protect the health of the people of Prince Edward Island. So red tape is important, but making sure that there's an

easy way for our small businesses to be able to manoeuvre their way through the tape is where the issue is.

I'm very happy that we're able to, as a government, be able to introduce this. The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir is absolutely right that this was an issue that I identified, and that we started acting on as soon as we got elected, and probably we will continue to work on it. What's unfortunate is the fact that they had 11 years of power where they chose not to address this issue. Most likely it had to do with the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir and the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters didn't have the support of their colleagues, because now they seem to be very supportive of our ideas.

They see a government that is going out and that is making investments in our small business community by increasing their tax threshold by lowering down the small business tax rates in this province, by creating employment opportunities in bioscience and aerospace and IT and (Indistinct) office supports and renewable energy. By making sure that we're there to support the beef plant in this province, to the tourist industry, the fisheries with low-interest loans.

I know that the Member from Montague-Kilmuir said that he couldn't do it when he was in power. He couldn't do anything with the low-interest loan program. That's because his Cabinet colleagues would not support him. I know in the bottom of his heart he actually thought he could do it. The same with the new Montague high school. Something he said he couldn't do, probably his colleagues thought. But when we came into government we were able to introduce the low-interest loan program. We were able to build a new high school in Montague. We were able to help out the community of Georgetown by loaning money to the

shipyard so they're able to continue on. By continuing to work with Holland College they expanded in the Georgetown area.

Why I'm pointing all this out is that after 11 years of neglect there is no way that the Member from Montague-Kilmuir and Georgetown-St. Peters could have agreed with all the neglect, but they just have to look at all the investments that our government is making. I'm sure they have a difficult time sitting in opposition because they look across the isle and they say: There is a can do government. I know they want to leave their party. I know they want to join a party that gets things done. That's why they're introducing motions such as this that support our initiatives that we put in place.

So I say to the two members across the floor, we came to power with the theme that we were going to represent all Islanders regardless of their political stripe. I can assure them that we're going to support this motion and we'll welcome them with open arms when they're ready to join a government that's actually getting things done over a three-year period regardless of 11 years of neglect.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: One moment please, hon. member.

I'm going to go to the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir for recognition of guests.

Oh, you were going to do that too.

Okay, I'll go the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Premier Ghiz: She's not crossing the floor. But maybe you guys will.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Lorraine Robinson.

Welcome to the House tonight.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: I'll go to the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters to close debate on the motion.

Mr. M. Currie: Madam Speaker, the Premier promised he was going to do a red tape review and we see that every promise he makes, he breaks his promise.

But the minister of transportation and public works mentioned how he was introducing measures to reduce red tape. All I've seen the minister of transportation do since he came to power -

Premier Ghiz: Paved roads.

Mr. M. Currie: The roads he's paving are falling apart. He's brought in more fee increases than any other minister in the history of this province. Something like 7 or \$9 million snuck in here under the cover of darkness and he thinks that he is doing the right thing for our small businesses.

I know the minister of environment is not here, but he done his part to raise the fees for fines. Some people that are cutting a few branches and stuff around streams and around shores are getting fines of 3 and 4,000. He's causing a lot of havoc out there.

I know the Premier talked about loans for Georgetown. I'm just wondering if he loaned them any more for legal fees when they closed our school when they needed money to - I know that he helped out Irving before, and so do we. The legal fees that the town received for trying to save their school, which they did save at the end of it, is not the way a government should operate. I

don't think a rural community should have to legally take on a government when they announce that they're going to close a school, especially when they wouldn't come in and talk to the people. They just indicate that they're going to close their school and take it or leave it and that's the way this government operates.

This is a good motion. It's one that has been promised by this government for a couple of years now and they certainly haven't done anything with it. Just increased fees and made it harder for the private sector to operate in this province. I do hope that they listen to what we're trying to say here tonight and do what they promised. They promised to bring in a red tape review. I hope they do for the betterment of the private sector and for all the jobs that can be created in this province.

I don't hold much hope for the Premier because whenever he makes a promise he breaks it. Anyway, I'll close my comments with that.

Speaker: Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Bagnall: We want a standing vote on this, Madam Speaker.

(Indistinct) lot of empty seats in here so -

Speaker: Hon. member, we're not allowed to - as you know.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm not saying anybody's missing, I'm just saying we got a lot of empty seats.

Speaker: We will call a recorded division, standing vote on the motion.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please ring the bells.

[The bells were rung]

Speaker: Government House Whip, are your members ready to vote? Are they here?

Mr. McGeoghegan: No, not yet.

Speaker: Few more moments.

Mr. McGeoghegan: Madam Speaker, all members are present.

Speaker: Thank you, Government Whip.

Government Opposition Whip, are you members present?

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. Premier, the hon. Minister of Finance and Municipal Affairs, the hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development and Attorney General, the hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture, the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier, the hon. Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour, the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the hon. Opposition House Leader, the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, 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: The motion has carried

unanimously.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Opposition calls Motion No. 54.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Motion No. 54.

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

WHEREAS in their 2009/2010 budget, the Government of Prince Edward Island increased total spending by 10.6 percent;

AND WHEREAS this spending included increases in most government departments;

AND WHEREAS the province is facing a ballooning deficit of more than eighty-five million dollars;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly encourage the government to follow the recommendations of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and establish prudent and strategic expenditure controls in their upcoming 2010/2011 budget;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Members of this Legislative Assembly encourage the Government of Prince Edward Island to establish a plan to effectively manage and reduce the province's ballooning deficit.

Speaker: I'll call on the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir to open debate on the

motion.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to have this opportunity to bring forward this opposition motion. Prince Edward Island is facing some serious financial issues.

Mr. M. Currie: Unbelievable.

Mr. Bagnall: With its massive, ballooning debt, it appears that this government's spending frenzy has not slowed down in the least during their three years of administration.

Mr. Sheridan: Everybody loved it. Everybody.

Mr. Bagnall: Rather than working to bring gainful, lasting employment opportunities, rather than resolving the child care crisis, and rather than working to reduce Islanders' skyrocketing electricity bills -

Mr. M. Currie: Forty-two per cent.

Mr. Bagnall: - this Government has spent freely, hiring over 800 people, including wine and beer experts, renovating government offices, and giving big untendered contracts and loans to their friends.

The Premier and his treasurer need to talk to everyday Islanders to learn how these individuals and families have tightened their belts to cope with the global economic downturn. Clearly, this Premier and his administration need to get out of their offices and get off their airplanes and into Island homes.

I have had the privilege of meeting thousands of extraordinary Islanders from farmers, students, seniors, families, daycare operators, fishers, tourism and small

business operators, and the immigrant community, while travelling from one end of the Island to the other. It's been a very long time since I have seen so many Islanders who are facing financial hardships.

It is very worrisome to hear the hardships of many Islanders: whether it's farmers who fear that they may have their farms taken away from them; whether it's tourist operators who aren't sure if they will be able to get through another season; whether it's fishermen who are having to sell their licences because they just can't do it any more; or whether it's a daycare facility that has to close their doors, leaving children and parents in the lurch. We're in a crisis. Many Islanders simply don't know what their future holds. Personally, I find it very upsetting.

I am referring to farmers, fishermen, whose families have made a living off the land and sea for over a century. They are being forced to give up. It's very disheartening to see that taking place.

There are a few tourism operators who did well last season. There are others who closed their doors long before Labour Day and they are anxious for the upcoming season, and are hopeful that it will bring good business. But if it doesn't, there will be a lot more tourism operators go by the wayside too.

All the while, this government continues to spend freely. An \$85-million deficit - a \$54 million predicted. The total debt is climbing in the range of \$2 billion. That's tough for this little Island of 140,000 people. Islanders are well aware of what happens when you have a mortgage. When you decide you need a car, new furniture, a trip, and before long you find yourself unable to pay your bills each month and the bank is knocking at your door. That's what is happening with this

government. Islanders are very nervous. Islanders are very scared. I cannot understand how government could end up spending an \$85 million deficit on a year, when they got \$23.9 million surplus handed to them.

I am particularly concerned that this administration feels it can ignore the recommendations of groups like DBRS, a credit rating institution. Government has been warned that it needs to put in place a clear plan to deal with its growing deficit. We've seen no plan. We've seen no indication that there is a definite reduction plan in spending and how we're going to get back to a balanced budget. Oh yes, the provincial treasurer has put some numbers on a piece of paper - his fantasy list - and said: This is where I'm going to be in such and such a time, this is where I'm going to be here.

But he's got no plan in place on how to get there. That's what's lacking. That's what's lacking here, and as far as the problem, we are the only province in Canada that does not have such a plan, and that's kind of scary. Other province realize the situation of the downturn and the economic crisis that's taking place across the country. But our provincial treasurer seems to think that: Oh, it's a great day, everything is going good, and wow, we're doing a good job. But the facts are there - deficit upon deficit upon deficit.

Sadly, the Premier and the provincial treasurer have simply chosen to ignore the fact.

Premier Ghiz: Shame.

Mr. Bagnall: Shame. That we need a plan put in place.

I am also skeptical of the claims by the provincial treasurer who is boasting that the

deficit figures will be better than projected. Anybody can do that. Anybody can put down overinflated figures and then come in a little bit better and say: I did a great job.

But the actual fact is deficits are deficits, and to brag about coming in with 54 and \$85 million deficits - I can understand why he's not with the Credit Union any longer. I am also skeptical about the claims the provincial treasurer who is boasting that he has a plan in place, but when asked to table the plan - we haven't seen anything. So I guess we'll just have to wait and see, because nothing has shown up. So that's good.

In the meantime, it's a sad commentary when our local newspapers are having their advertising revenues boosted by pages of advertisements announcing mortgage sales. The mortgage sales across the province are continuing to skyrocket. They're going to continue to skyrocket. The provincial treasurer is putting these people out of their homes and out of their businesses. This is really disheartening to the province.

We see boarded up businesses in our community and lost jobs. Small businesses are having a considerably hard time trying to survive today. When you read in the paper and you see nothing but a list of bankruptcies and mortgage sales, it's very disheartening. As we said in the last motion, we're the highest record of bankruptcies in Canada - 259%. That's unbelievable bankruptcies that are taking place.

We saw the largest private employer in this province shut down just before Christmas, and recently upwards of 35 potato growers lost their contracts. It's a very hard time and it's very difficult. How do you deal with people when you're not doing anything to stimulate the economy and business just keeps eroding?

The government increased total spending by 10.6%. When you look at it, 10.6 doesn't sound like much, but when we're talking billions of dollars it's a lot of money. The spending includes increases to most government departments. I'm referring to their hiring of extra staff, fresh cut flowers delivery to offices for ministers - I can't believe it - renovations, furniture and artwork, to list a lot of the ongoing extra costs that are going into the minister's office and government.

Ms. Bertram: Supporting our artists, I know it's terrible.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I didn't want to mention anybody's name, but obviously the minister of health must be taking exception because no one mentioned her name and she is going ballistic over there.

Not my fault she gets fresh cut flowers delivered to her office every day. I mean, I can understand why she would get upset, especially when you're using taxpayers dollars to do that, using taxpayers dollars to do those things. Shame, shame, shame. Obviously wasting the money doesn't seem to bother the minister at all.

It is disappointing to see this Premier has offered no leadership. He should be slapping the hands of these ministers for this unruly spending that they're doing in their department, especially when we're not in economic stable times.

But to spend money like that, to spend money on remodelling offices, to spend money on cut flowers, to spend money on artwork put in her office? Going above and beyond in a time when we're doing major deficit reduction.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: I hear the wanna-be minister

over in the corner there chirping, but the facts are there, Madam Speaker.

The costs are so high in dealing with it. He said next to nothing about the blooming debt the government has racked up through reckless spending.

Ms. Dunsford: (Indistinct) contract

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I can understand that the member from Stratford's upset, she wanted in Cabinet and didn't get there, so she's chirping ever since.

Anyway, that's fine. She got overlooked again, I mean, that's fine. If she wants to keep chirping maybe the next he looks he'll look at her again when he -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Speaker: Hon. member, stick to the motion.

Mr. Bagnall: I am, I am. So anyway, Madam Speaker -

Ms. Dunsford: Don't support Island artists. (Indistinct) Island, artists shouldn't make money.

Mr. Bagnall: I think that the Islanders who work in sectors are seeing their businesses being shut down because of the government policies and the spending that keeps going on -

Ms. Bertram: (Indistinct) artists in this community listen to you.

Mr. Bagnall: I tell you, it's really difficult, Madam Speaker.

It's like the energized bunny never slows, so the minister just keeps spending. He just keeps going on and on and on. I hope he's go Duracell batteries in it or maybe a cheaper battery so it'll die and he'll stop that

spending.

When is the cost benefit analysis ever done?

An Hon. Member: Never.

Mr. Bagnall: He's never done one. When is the work plan ever done? Never. Government has decided to move departments without revealing the true costs of the moves. Also moving liquor stores and saying it's not going to cost a cent, but it's actually going to cost millions of dollars to do that.

I can't blame the minister of tourism that is there now and the minister, head of the liquor commission, because it was done before he got there. He has to live with it and wear the previous minister's reckless spending on his shoulders. I know he's embarrassed. Look, his face is red. He is so embarrassed the discussion even comes up, but it's an actual fact that the spending just keeps going and going.

Again I state, this administration took over a government with a \$23.9 million surplus and they haven't seen a surplus since. It's been deficit, deficit, deficit ever since and it doesn't seem to be getting any better. The structural debt hasn't changed a bit in the last year. You can play with figures but your structural debt doesn't change.

Government has to continue to receive record high levels of equalization payments and federal transfers, yet the deficit continues to bloom. We as a province have got more money in the last three years than in the history of this government.

I tell you of one of the great things that happened. Pat Binns, before he left government, went to Ottawa and he said: There has been changes happening to the infrastructure that's going to hurt this province. So he went to Ottawa and he sat

down with the prime minister and said: Listen, you have to help our province. We need some help, we need more money coming in to this province. So the prime minister said: Patrick, how much do you need? So what happened was he said to him: How much more money do you need? He said: If we could get another \$25 million a year to help over the next period of time, that would help. He said: Okay, I will give you \$25 million year for seven years, no strings attached. You can take that and do whatever you want with that.

That would have helped seven years to keep things going. But you know what happened? I'll tell you what happened. Our provincial treasurer figured he was only going to be here four years so he took that money. Instead of having \$25 million a year for seven years, he gets \$42 million a year to help his budget so his figures don't look as bad as they should have. He takes \$42 million, not 25, and now we don't get it for seven years, we only get it for 4.3 years. That's what he's done. He has taken this money for the short term to make himself look good because he knows after the next election, even if they won, he'd never be there again.

So that's what he's done. He wanted to try to make himself look good, and his figures look good, for the next four years. It's a shame, though, that we had \$25 million coming in for seven years, and what happened? Anyway, that got changed. It's only going to be four years now, at 42 million.

An Hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Bagnall: I mean, it helped his budget, \$17 million a year. Sure, why wouldn't it? But he's not helping the long term at all for this province.

The formula has been fixed well over the

last year so that government should really know what they're receiving for the next several years. They should recognize, because Ontario is now a have-not province, and the stress is going to continue to rack up on the provincial budgets over the years.

Mr. M. Currie: The Premier did nothing.

Mr. Bagnall: There will be less money coming in because of the formula..

Mr. M. Currie: The Premier's done nothing.

Mr. Bagnall: As opposition has mentioned before in this House -

Some Hon. Members: Call the hour.

Mr. Bagnall: - the federal -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Oh, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hour has been called.

I call on the hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Vernon River-Stratford, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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