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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Speaker: Hon. Kathleen M. Casey

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The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (I)

Speaker (Casey): The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone to the public gallery. I see John Rowe from down east. Great to see John here today. Of course, his son is very successful now in the business world. Probably because we went to the same university together. Great to see John in the gallery today. Also, that would be Bishop's University, by the way.

Also, great to see Forbes Kennedy, hockey legend in Canada and from Prince Edward Island. Great to see Forbes in the gallery today, along with Philip Claybourne.

I also know that we're going to have some students joining us a little later one from Queen Elizabeth Elementary School up in the Kensington area. Very much like to welcome them.

And of course, Madam Speaker, it's great to have you back in the chair and it's great to see the Leader of the Opposition. Congratulations go out to her daughter on her graduation, I believe.

To all those watching on EastLink channel 10, I hope everyone has a great weekend.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you,

Madam Speaker.

I'd like to rise and welcome everybody to the gallery today, and to the grade 6 class that will be joining us a little later. I, too, want to wish my own daughter congratulations. It was wonderful. She graduated from Steinhardt in NYU this week and did her family very proud.

I also want to say hello to all the people that are working in the bioscience sector this week. Have a great week.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I rise to welcome guests to the gallery, particularly Forbes Kennedy. Forbes was telling me today that he's got the pleasure of having two jerseys in his house, a Philadelphia jersey and a Boston jersey. So whatever the outcome, he'll be wearing the jersey with pride tomorrow. I wish him well, and Toronto too (Indistinct).

I also want to acknowledge Philip Claybourne who's a city police officer and does a great job with the city force. Welcome both of them to the gallery today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome all in the public gallery today. It's great to have you

in here on a nice day like this. I'd also like to say happy birthday to Sherwood resident Art Doucette who's celebrating his 80th birthday this weekend. The family's having a get-together at Papa Joe's on Saturday, two to four. So if anybody has some free time, pop over. I'm sure Art and Shirley would be glad to have everybody drop in.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Welcome back to you.

I'd like to send out a few birthday greetings, this morning to several of my constituents. First of all, welcome everyone in the gallery that are with us today and hope they enjoy the deliberations today.

At Stewart Memorial Hospital, Elizabeth Jones is celebrating her birthday. She's in the long-term care wing. Mary Lewis will be 90 years old tomorrow, a Stewart Memorial Hospital resident. Also, Elvira Baglolo, of southwest lot 16, will be celebrating with her family at Miscouche legion tomorrow night, her 80th birthday.

Just to extend, also, sympathies to Ruth Gillis and the family of the late Harry Gillis who passed away this past week.

Send greetings out to everyone watching in Tyne Valley-Linkletter and wish them a great weekend.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everybody to the gallery today. I see John Rowe is here, Eddie Lund, Forbie Kennedy and his son-in-law, Phil Claybourne.

I, also, today would like to say a special hello to my son, Jason, and his wife, Tanya, my daughter-in-law. Yesterday morning, about six o'clock, Tanya gave birth to a lovely baby boy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Watts: They're pretty proud parents. The boy's name is Nolan. So anyway, it's a very exciting time in the Watts household and also for the Lynch household because Tanya's mom is over from Nova Scotia to visit.

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.

I, too, would like to welcome everyone in the public gallery this morning. It's great to see John Rowe here this morning. I see in the *Guardian* this morning that Island Abbey Foods has been recognized for their success and I know that John and his family - John's been an inspirational mentor to his sons there and they're doing a lot of great work.

As well, I understand we're having some students joining us this morning. I want to recognize the accomplishments of some students in the Souris area in powerlifting. Both the women's and men's powerlifting teams from SRHS, Souris Regional High School, have won the provincial titles for 2010. They captured 11 medals at the

provincial championships and set 10 provincial records. This is the second year in a row that the ladies from SRHS have won, so it's great to see that the strength of Prince Edward Island is in the first district.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is a great day. The sun is shining outside, people working. I just want to thank all the workers, all at the new construction site there, the new hotel. They're doing a great job.

I want to congratulate John Rowe here. I want to thank him for his work on the forestry council. He's been doing a great job there. We owe him a lot. We'll be tabling something on Tuesday. A phenomenal report that he and his committee did, and I want to thank him for the work on that.

I see Forbie Kennedy up there, the father of two great girls, Donna and Caroline. And Philip Claybourne. Philip Claybourne and I took a poetry class together in university. Can you imagine that? Two good old boys taking poetry class?

Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

Between the two of us, we got 50.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just want to welcome those to the gallery. John Rowe, I know he's done some great work for the forestry council.

Also want to recognize Forbie Kennedy up in the gallery there. Forbie, being a former Boston Bruin and Philadelphia Flyer, I'm sure he is torn about what goes on at the game tonight. But anyway, I'm a little concerned that he's wearing orange and white. I thought, surely, he'd be wearing black and gold today. But anyway, Forbie has had a very distinguished career in the NHL and as a member who represents hockey for rural PEI, O'Leary, I have to comment that Forbie has some connections in the O'Leary area. He's done a lot of coaching up in that area. I believe maybe grandparents from O'Leary, if I'm correct in that. Certainly what to wish him well.

Another Islander who's now with the Bruins, Adam McQuaid. I'm hoping he'll get in the lineup tonight and play an integral role in the outcome of the game - hopefully successful for the game against Boston, Philadelphia tonight.

So with that, Madam Speaker, thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Ms. Dunsford: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Welcome to everyone in the gallery and everyone home watching on EastLink. To remind everyone in the House, there is more going on this weekend than hockey, although I'm sure we'll all be glued at some point. There's a couple of great things happening. One, tonight, is a celebration of Catherine Hennessey's contribution to the heritage protection here in Charlottetown and in the Island. It's a great awards

celebration tonight.

As well, the Island Media Arts Co-op is having their film festival this weekend. The lineup looks fantastic. There'll be lots of participation from the people in the Charlottetown and Stratford area and I encourage everyone to take in some of that if they can.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today and welcome everyone to the gallery, especially a friend, Forbie Kennedy. When the Island junior A hockey league was going, Forbie and I used to have a great working relationship. Forbie was with the Charlottetown team and I was the general manager at that time with the Kings County Kings. I can assure there's a few stories we could tell.

Also, Phil Claybourne, welcome to the gallery. And also, a gentleman from down in Kings County, John Rowe. Welcome, John, to the gallery.

While I'm up on my feet, this morning we saw an add in the paper where we got another candidate running for our party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: When I arrived at the coffee shop this morning I was told that there was a campaign on for me to run. So I have to tell you that the coffee boys said that they would look after me fine and they would also get a couple of school buses and paint them blue so that we could haul in all the people to vote for the nomination.

So with that, I had to really inform them that I was not going to be running for the leadership.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, the tears were running down their cheeks when I was telling them that.

I just had to make sure that people across the province realized that the answer to that question is, no, I will not be running for the leadership.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. MacKinley: Thank you very much -

Mr. Brown: Ronnie's crying, look. He's sad.

Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Brown: (Indistinct) sad day for him.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. MacKinley: Madam Speaker, I would like to welcome all the people to the gallery.

Also, I would like to welcome all the viewers that are turning on t.v. Any new Tories that are looking for (Indistinct) in the dark, it's nice to see you there.

Also, it's interesting to see how when Peter Llewellyn came out the hon. gentleman hid - Montague's not running - and the hon. leader jumped on the first plane home and she's back. So with that, I want to say just

when one candidate comes out, I've never seen it, all the times, the Liberal history, of so many - the way they take notice. One person quits, another person flies back.

So with that, I'd just like to welcome everybody to the gallery and wish Mr. Llewellyn great success in his endurance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

My pleasure to stand in the House today to welcome all those with us. Mr. Eddie Lund, a great sunny Friday morning to join us. He's made his trek all the way across town.

A special hello to Mr. Forbie Kennedy. I refereed an awful lot of hockey games when he was coaching the Abbies, and Forbie was always a pure gentleman behind the bench and special.

But my favourite story of Forbie Kennedy involves John Ferguson one night on CBC, and he was asked who the toughest character he ever tangled with and he said: This little guy from Prince Edward Island, Forbie Kennedy was the toughest guy I ever had to have an encounter with. So our hats are always off to you, Forbie, in that aspect. And great hands, great goal scorer as well. Yeah. (Indistinct).

Welcome everyone else watching in the great district of Kensington. I'll just highlight everyone here just to be watching out for the decorum as our Kensington elementary troop in. You will watch this group. This is how they perform every day in their hallways. I have never seen a school like it, Madam Speaker, and with Nancy Murphy's leadership, I'm sure you'll see a

wonderful class come through.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

UPEI Hockey Mommas Paderno Cup Challenge

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I believe we're having a bit of a hockey theme for statements today.

It's my pleasure to rise today to congratulate the UPEI Hockey Mommas Paderno Cup Challenge on another successful tournament this year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: This annual tournament has become popular for female hockey players over 35 throughout the Atlantic Provinces. This fundraiser is a continuation of the original Pink Hockey Mommas event here here in Charlottetown.

This year, 20 teams took part to raise money for cancer research and the UPEI Women's Hockey Program. Teams from as far away as Cape Breton and Saint John took part. Players in all three divisions, D-beginner, DD-intermediate, and DDD-competitive can participate. It is a fun way to raise awareness for cancer research while promoting women's hockey.

The winners from this year's tournament in each division were the Souris Spud Buster in the D division, West Prince in the DD division and Queens County Black Widows in the DDD division.

Bruce Donaldson, the organizer of the event, who is also head coach of UPEI Panthers Women's Hockey team, was assisted by a great group of volunteers. All of them can be proud in the fact they raised \$10,000 for the PEI Division of the Canadian Cancer Society.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, I want to thank Bruce and everyone that helped make this great event a success. I am sure, given the past success of this event, that they will continue to enjoy great numbers for future tournaments.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Recognition of Forbes Kennedy

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It goes without saying that almost every young man's dream is to play hockey in the National Hockey League. In the 1956-1957 National Hockey League season a young Charlottetown boy realized that dream.

After playing junior hockey for the Montreal Junior Canadiens, Forbes Kennedy played his first NHL game in a Chicago Black Hawks uniform. Over the next 14 years Forbes Kennedy would go on to play for the Detroit Red Wings, the Boston Bruins, the Philadelphia Flyers and the Toronto Maple Leafs.

During that time Forbes played a total of 603 games, scoring 70 goals and 108 assists while amassing almost 1,000 minutes in penalties. Although small in stature, Forbes Kennedy always played big and developed a reputation as being the toughest and grittiest player in the NHL. To have broke into the

NHL during the old 6 team league, that was a major accomplishment.

The most notable time in Forbes Kennedy career was when he played for the Boston Bruins with such greats as Bobby Orr and Johnny Bucyk. Forbes was a fan favourite and they truly loved him in Boston. This was very evident one night when in Boston he was given a standing ovation for his great work in killing off a Bruins' penalty. I was at that game and it must have been a very proud moment for Forbes Kennedy because it sure was for me.

Congratulations, Forbes, for your career in professional hockey. You made small-town PEI big-time proud.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Tribute to Wayne Buote

Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, Prince Edward Island has suffered a terrible loss this week.

We were shocked and saddened to hear about the sudden passing of Wayne Buote. Wayne was a tremendous asset to his community. Wayne exemplified many traits that Islanders value. He was caring, compassionate, friendly and very hard-working.

This community was a huge part of his life. He frequently gave back by helping out smaller businesses and serving on boards in Rustico and Cavendish. Being one of 14 children, Wayne quickly learned that negotiation was a necessary tool for survival.

It makes sense, then, that he was very successful in business. He owned several businesses and he has employed over 100 Islanders.

We were very sad to hear of his passing. He was a great friend and colleague in his 62 years. Although it's a difficult time for everyone who knew him, it is important to remember that Wayne lived a very full and rewarding life. Thank you, Wayne, for all your hard work.

On behalf of opposition, we would like to extend our condolences to his wife Lise, his sons Christopher and Patrick and all his family and friends. We are thinking of you all in this difficult time.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Order, please!

Performers at Festival of Lights (further)

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Since the Minister of Tourism and Culture has been in the hot seat all week, I think I'll go back to him again this time.

Minister, you committed to bring back the information on the funding for the Festival of Lights. I'm sure you have it with you today.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and

Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, I don't have it with me today.

The hon. member - I believe it's called Charlottetown SummerFest you're referring to.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I'll go to the next question.

Mr. Minister, how much funding did you give to the Festival of Lights last year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, I don't have that number with me today.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I'm surprised the minister wouldn't have those numbers because the topic's been up all week, and I would think that he would have been briefed on that information.

Minister, did the province make the money back on that promotion last year? I understand it was a flop.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member there seems to have a pick on the Charlottetown or the SummerFest or the Festival of Lights.

I have with me a letter that was released from Charlottetown SummerFest. Can I, with your indulgence, read this?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Vessey: Quote: “We have been made aware of some very disappointing comments made in the Legislature today regarding Tourism Charlottetown’s contractual arrangements with Cirque du Soleil regarding cost overruns.

“Our plans for this exciting performance at this year’s Charlottetown SummerFest have not changed and these comments are, to say the least very unfortunate.”

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Vessey: “Our contract with Cirque du Soleil has not changed in any way since its signing back in February.

“It is unfortunate that such inaccurate statements can be presented without the real facts.”

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Vessey: “Spreading rumours and innuendo while we and our partners are trying to strengthen this important sector in tough economic times is not helpful.

“We are so fortunate to have Cirque du Soleil produce a custom designed show for Prince Edward Island and having Politicians make comments like this is once again disappointing to Islanders and to the Tourism Industry.

“As President of Tourism Charlottetown I commend the entire Team for their hard work on this great new event!

“Doug Newson, President
Tourism Charlottetown and the PEI
Convention Partnership”

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Bagnall: The minister still hasn’t answered any questions yet.

Minister, is the \$250,000 that you were paying to the Cirque du Soleil in addition to what you paid last year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, it’s unfortunate that the hon. member of the opposition has to drag the Charlottetown SummerFest festival through the mud in here.

They’re trying to do a new event and a family event and to reinvent their event for all, and for the hon. member to question it at this time when it’s just starting the first of tourism season, I think it’s shameful.

An Hon. Member: Shameful.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Still he hasn’t answered the question. What date did you confirm that you were going to give them this money?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member is trying to make it look like we’re hiding something here with the funding to Cirque du Soleil, but if he did his research, which I honestly don’t think he

does very well - he just throws stuff out, whoever tells him or gives him a brown paper envelope or whatever - but if you do your research, you'll find that there is a signature event policy in my department which has all kinds of criteria to meet and anyone can apply to it and the funding is there.

We're open for business.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: That's what I expected. No answer again, Madam Speaker.

The problem being is, when he found out there was a problem, that 250,000 seemed to mysteriously get to this tourism promotion. So I'm curious as to why the dollar figure didn't go out with you when you made your press conference on this deal. Why did you hide the dollar figure?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct). You were already told that.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, again, Tourism Charlottetown do their own thing.

We fund it. They had an announcement. We announced that we were funding partners. It was done.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It just seems like the money mysteriously - 200,000 more has gone into the promotion very quickly -

Premier Ghiz: Again, that's rumour and innuendo.

Mr. Bagnall: - and so I got to - minister, so you stand in the House today and guarantee that there won't be any more tourism money going into this promotion?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, again, I find the question a little shameful for the industry.

Our tourism industry, they're a great group of people, and Tourism Charlottetown is a great organization. They've followed the rules of our department. They've applied for funding for signature events, and I find it shameful that the hon. member has a problem with that.

And no, there'll be no more funding going into that.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: You know, Madam Speaker, I think the reason he never announced the 250,000 was because it was never there until recently, and when he had to.

Premier Ghiz: (Indistinct) that's wrong (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: It's just when mistakes and costs come to that there's extra money involved, Madam Speaker.

So you're going to tell us that you're not going to be putting any more money into it. Minister, you still never have me the date and when you decided to give them - announce this funding for them. When was

that date?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: I believe the hon. member must have gotten a bad leak on this one because we're not hiding anything.

If he wants me, I'll bring back the date of the application that Tourism Charlottetown has applied under our policy of signature events, and I'll be glad to bring it back if I can.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Signature event funding

Mr. Bagnall: Can you table today in the House what other projects are going to be receiving money under this fund?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: This fund, Madam Speaker, is open to anyone.

People apply to it and then we evaluate it to see what they trigger for the funding. I don't have any more applications in today, so I don't have anything to table.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Cavendish Beach Music Festival funding

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you. How much will the Cavendish Beach Music Festival receive from your department of tourism this year?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Okay, so now we're dragging Tourism Charlottetown through the mud, so now we're taking a turn out to rural PEI to go at Cavendish beach, Madam Speaker.

Cavendish beach is a major - it's a new event that we're very proud to partner with. It's got great spinoffs, not only for Cavendish but for all of Prince Edward Island, and it's a major family event. They did, too, apply to the signature events program and I'm happy to say we've partnered with them for 200,000.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: So the biggest weekend of the year they're receiving less money than the Tourism Charlottetown one. Okay.

Minister, why would they be getting less money than the Charlottetown tourism festival? Why would Cavendish beach?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, this is an ongoing funding agreement we do have with Cavendish beach, and I suggest that if he wants to know the details of the business contract he talk to Cavendish beach.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Minister, would you table the two proposals that you've received from both groups for this funding?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Hon. member, you mean the Cavendish beach and Tourism Charlottetown? I'll go back to my department and look into it, and if I can table it I will.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Signature event funding (further)

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, I guess a question, then. If there's other people wanting to hold events - like, let's say Summerside wanted to bring in - is this \$200,000 available to them to bring in for their tourism thing, too?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, we're open across the province to work with people wanting to bring good entertainment to our province, and we have the doors closed on no one.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: I'm sorry, could he repeat that? I just couldn't catch -

An Hon. Member: The doors are open.

Mr. Bagnall: - I couldn't hear what he was saying at the end. Could he - ask to repeat it?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, again, my department, we have a policy in place to provide funding for signature events, and it's open to anyone in the province.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Potato board and Irving

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My next question will be for the Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier.

Minister, do you feel that is beneficial for potato growers to enter into an agreement with processing companies prior to planting so that they can ensure that they are able to sell their crops?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, absolutely.

It's extremely important to have the contract signed before the crop goes in the ground so you know what varieties you need, what the criteria is and what the pricing is. Absolutely.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, are you aware that the potato marketing board - the board of directors - made an order to this effect that was supported by the vote from the potato growers?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I'm going to need more information.

I'm not understanding the issue the hon. member is bringing forward.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Well, Madam Speaker -

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: - to the minister again.

Are you aware that the potato marketing board, the board of directors, made an order to that effect that was supported by the potato growers in this province?

An Hon. Member: What effect?

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

Mr. Webster: Hon. member, Madam Speaker, I think the issue is that the hon. member is suggesting that the potato board has taken a challenge to the appeals tribunal of the *Natural Products Marketing Act* to have the contract resolved by I believe it's April 15th.

If it isn't resolved at that point in time then it goes to binding arbitration. I think that's what he's asking.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: No, that isn't what I'm asking, but I will be asking it when I get down the road a little further here.

Madam Speaker, do you know how the Irvings feel about this issue?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, there seems to be a fair bit of confusion around the questioning from the hon. member.

He'll have to keep asking his questions until I get down to the point where I understand exactly what he means.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, I'm not surprised the minister doesn't realize.

He doesn't know what is going on in agriculture, he doesn't know what's going on in the potato board. So I'm not surprised that he doesn't realize what's going on in the industry. Minister, are you aware that the Irvings have appealed the board order and that the board turned it down?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, for 2009 growing year the contract with, I believe, both processors was not resolved until I believe it was well into June.

There were potato farmers that had their crops already planted assuming it was going to be the same volume as the previous year. What actually happened, there were reductions in french fry consumption in North America, and there were farmers actually had crops planted which they assumed was destined for markets in North America and the volume declined a little bit. That left the farming community in a pretty precarious situation because they had crops planted and no market, which they assumed was going to be there.

So my understanding is the potato board decided to have a vote - a ballot vote, I believe it was, but don't hold me to that. But they had a series of meetings and decided that it would be appropriate if they had the contract resolved by April 15th so they would know what varieties to plant, what volume to plant and what the criteria was going to be on the contract. They've done that, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from

Montague-Kilmuir.

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

It seems his memory has come back very quickly. To the same minister. Are you aware that Irving's is now appealing the natural products marketing - to them for an overruling, for the tribunal act to overrule the potato board's decision?

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

Mr. Webster: Yes, Madam Speaker, I am aware that one of the processors on Prince Edward Island is appealing the decision of the potato board, and that is appealed through the *Natural Products Marketing Act* appeal tribunal portion of that.

That's an independent appeal, and that goes forward over the next weeks and months, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the same minister. Minister, who's side are you on here? Are you on the Irving's side or are you on the potato growers side?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we as government will be following due process whatever the rules and regulations are of engagement on this appeal tribunal.

This minister of agriculture will not commit a criminal act in any way and interfere with a decision of an independent organization like the appeals tribunal. That's the court of law or the court of judgement, if you like,

with respect to how agriculture products are traded. So we'll be seeing how the process unfolds, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the same minister. Minister, will the province be seeking an intervener status on behalf of the potato marketing board during the tribunal?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, the appeal tribunal members I believe are in place.

That whole process is there. There's a regulatory format that they must follow on how they make their judgement call. We'll be watching that and see how it plays out, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, you didn't answer the question. Will the province be seeking an intervener status on behalf of the potato marketing board to the tribunal? Will you or will you not? Yes or no.

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, we will not be intervening with the process that is a legal and binding process.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

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

Why not? You tried to pretend that you're standing up to the potato industry and that you're going to stick up for the growers. Why aren't you doing this? Why will you not stand up for the growers and seek intervener status?

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I will not be interfering with the legal process that's in place now.

There's a process to follow and I will not commit any interference or criminal overriding of any organization or body that has a process that they need to follow, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you. The minister is completely out to lunch on that issue because he wouldn't be. Anybody has a chance to have intervener status and he can stand up at any time and speak to it again.

Now, minister, let's get down to brass tacks. Is the reason you're being silent on this issue because you sell to Irving's and you're scared that they'll cancel your contract?

Mr. Sheridan: Unbelievable. (Indistinct).

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, in my former life, all my business activities are held in a blind trust.

The process is there. The rules of engagement are that the minister of agriculture does not have any authority to be involved in the appeal tribunal process. For me to do that would be illegal activity on my

behalf and I am not doing that, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: It would not be illegal and anyone can have intervener status on an issue before an appeal, and the minister should know that.

Minister, since you seem to be in complete conflict on this issue, will you walk away and step aside from this issue and -

Mr. Sheridan: You just asked him to intervene.

Mr. Bagnall: He's in a conflict because he won't do anything. So I'm asking - he's already said that he won't do anything else, so will you step -

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, we know you're in a potential conflict here. Will you step aside so that another person can actually intervene on this issue?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

It's very unfortunate that the Member from Montague-Kilmuir is spewing innuendo again today. As the hon. Minister of Agriculture and the Deputy Premier of the province indicated, the Government of Prince Edward Island will be allowing the process to take place. There is an appeals tribunal and we respect the process.

With regards to the integrity of the minister of agriculture, we're very fortunate in this province to have a minister of agriculture that is as knowledgeable as he is with

relation to these issues.

The fact of the matter is that the minister of agriculture has everything in blind trust. On one hand you have the Member from Montague-Kilmuir asking to interfere in the process. Then when he says he's not interfering, then he says that he's in a conflict because he's not interfering.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir should be ashamed of himself for making accusations that he knows are inaccurate. If he has any issues, he knows that there is a due process and that is to go to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Just the indication that he's unwilling to do that is clear evidence that the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir is doing nothing but spewing innuendo against a tremendous minister of agriculture for the people of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We have a minister of agriculture that wouldn't stand up for the potato industry, we have a minister of agriculture that will not apply for intervener status. The same minister sells the potatoes to the people that are appealing to the tribunal and he's in a complete conflict of interest.

Minister, will you step aside from this file and allow a minister to step in place that will stand up for the industry, not look after your own interests?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Again, Madam Speaker, it's really shameful that the Member from Montague-Kilmuir continues to spew innuendo on the floor of the Legislature.

We saw a letter today from the Charlottetown tourism association really indicating that it's unfortunate that that member would come to this House without having the facts in place. He makes accusations of blackmail without even understanding the definition of blackmail.

Now, he attacks a very respected Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier in the Province of Prince Edward Island. He knows that if he has any allegations to make, that there is a process to do it. But we know that the Member from Montague-Kilmuir has one goal in mind, and that's to make headlines for himself on the backs of other individuals and bringing them down.

But on this side of the House, we're going to continue to work for the people of Prince Edward Island. I think that we're very fortunate in this province to have the current Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier representing the farmers of this province.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Back to the minister of agriculture. Have you been involved with this file up until now?

Speaker: The hon. minister of -

Mr. Bagnall: And -

Speaker: Sorry.

Mr. Webster: Madam Speaker, I'm aware that the vote was taken with regards to the potato board.

They polled their producers and they made a decision. I'm aware that this activity is going forth through the appeals tribunal.

What I'm hearing today is the hon. member really speaking out of both sides of his mouth. He's telling me to interfere on one hand. The other hand he's telling me to stay away from it. So I'm very much unclear of what's going on. But I can tell you, that former minister of agriculture did interfere, and there was a ruling done three years ago where he overruled the appeals tribunal. But we don't operate like that, Madam Speaker, and he did it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, yes, Madam Speaker, yes, and I did overrule.

Because I did stand up for the potato industry in this province. Not like you hiding in the sand. I stood up and made a decision. You had a chance, and you have a chance here to do this, to stand up for the industry, but you're more interested in your own purse-strings than you are the farmers in this province.

Why won't you step aside, minister? You're obviously in a conflict of interest every time something comes up in agriculture because it affects you. You won't make a ruling. You stand with your hands in your pocket and say nothing and do nothing. Why won't you step aside and do the honourable thing?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, again, probably taking a lead from the

Leader of the Opposition, is making accusations in this House based on people's personal involvement, and knows full well that when members of this Legislature get elected and they're appointed to the Executive Council that any involvement in files is put into blind trust so that they're able to continue on with the duties that they've been so elected for.

To point it out, that also the hon. member not only has those things in blind trust, he acts in the best interest of Islanders. If the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir wishes to make any accusations like that, he knows that there's a process to go through. The fact that he's unwilling to go through that process is a clear indication that he's more interested in smear than he is with doing what's best for the people of Prince Edward Island.

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

Change to peddler's licence

Mr. McGeoghegan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have a brief lead up to the question, so, with your indulgence.

My question today is for the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development. Last spring your department made changes to the lobster peddlers licence regulations that allowed fishermen to direct sell their catch to the public, and I commend you for that.

Lately I have had a number of calls from fishermen wondering if another change could be made, which would allow the licence holder to have one designated person peddle on their behalf. Right now, the regulation states that only the licence holder can peddle, but in a lot of harbours across

PEI they don't get in from fishing till mid-to late afternoon. This time constraint makes it impossible to make use of this option.

Mr. Minister, will you consider making this change so that more fishermen can make use of peddlers licences?

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

Mr. LeClair: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The hon. member makes a good point. Not every fishermen gets in early. A lot of them fish late into the day and into the evening even, some of them. We'll certainly look into that. It requires a change in regulations. We did make the peddlers licence available to core fishers, and that's what the regs state right now. We take that into consideration and look at it.

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

Mr. McGeoghegan: Supplementary question to the same minister.

If possible, could this change be made this season?

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

Mr. Bagnall: Sure it can.

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, we'll take this suggestion into consideration and look at what the regulations state and how it can be implemented, if it can be implemented.

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

West River bridge

Ms. Docherty: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The minister's department and staff have been diligent in their inspections of Island bridges just to ensure that they're safe for both Islanders and visitors alike to travel on. As I understand it, the West River bridge, which connects my district with the minister's district, has been identified in need of replacement. Can the minister inform the House what actually is wrong with the bridge that it needs to be replaced?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Basically, what's wrong with the bridge, the bridge is worn out. It's past its time. It's got to be replaced.

I took criticism from the Leader of the Opposition on the Priest Pond bridge here, to leave it - back it up. Then all of the sudden we had it posted and shut it right down. We are not experts on this. I got to rely on the engineers and the people that are professionals in this business. There are two examples of bridges we're getting to.

This had been neglected - these bridges - for 11, 12 years. I have \$11 million to put into bridges. I can do so much, and this is what we're doing. We fixed the Dunedin bridge for you last year, and that was in order to get the traffic around 5.5, 7.1 kilometres longer, depends where you're coming from, in order for when we shut his bridge down.

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

Ms. Docherty: Madam Speaker, can the minister inform the House when construction will actually begin, and how long will it take?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of

Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Mr. MacKinley: When the tender comes back in, construction could start in July. It could take between three and four months. It depends who tenders on it. We wouldn't know how long it's going to take until the tenders come in and we review the tenders. But we have called for - set up a - as soon as we get the tenders in, and we get that information, we have booked Afton Community Centre for the 20th of May, Thursday evening at 7:00, so our engineers can go out and explain just exactly what's taking place.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Crab draw fee

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A question to the minister of fisheries. Minister, I've been getting a few calls from fishermen wanting to know why you are forcing them to pay \$200 for the crab draw this year, and why the increase?

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

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, I'm not forcing anyone to pay anything for any draw.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker, the fishermen are telling us that in order to qualify to be in the crab draw they are forced to pay \$200 in order to participate in the crab draw.

Can you tell me, minister, why that has gone up from \$100 to \$200 this year?

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

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member will have to ask the PEIFA.

The crab allocation is given to the PEIFA by the DFO, and I'm not aware of the restrictions or the conditions that are put on the allocation as far as giving it out to the fishers.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So minister, you're not aware that this is taking place?

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

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, the question that the hon. member asked me is why I was doing it, and I'm not doing it.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: So minister, are you aware that fishermen are going to have to pay an increase from \$100 to \$200 in order to participate in the crab draw?

I think that's very clear.

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

Mr. LeClair: Yes, Madam Speaker, I have heard those conditions were being asked by the PEIFA.

From certain fishers I've heard that. We are looking at it. We have calls into DFO and the PEIFA, but that's an issue between DFO and the PEIFA and the fishers.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Madam Speaker - to the same minister - I think as you as minister, that's an issue for you as minister to be looking at.

Minister, fishermen are phoning and telling me that they are being forced to join the PEIFA because it costs \$100 to join the PEIFA, but if they don't belong they're being forced to pay \$200 to be able to get in the crab draw. Do you feel that this is fair?

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

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is saying it's up to me to intervene.

The DFO is a federal initiative and the crab draw is a federal allocation. It's given to the PEIFA. I would suggest maybe you talk to the federal minister and have her intervene if there's something being done that you would like to change.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: That seems to be the answer that I get from this minister every time an issue comes up. He always says: Go to the federal minister. Doesn't want to take responsibility for what's going on in his own province here.

Minister, do you not feel this is another cash grab against the fishermen? They're suffering hard enough right now. Why would you make these fishermen have to pay an extra hundred dollars in order to get into the crab? Even though the allocations are cut back, the province is still making them pay another hundred dollars. Why?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

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

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, the PEIFA - is right - is an organization of the fishermen.

It's not owned by government, and certainly I don't intend to take over the PEIFA and dictate what they should be doing.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, I'm sure the fishermen are going to be pleased that you don't want to stand up for any of the fishermen in this province and you want to turn everything over to somebody else.

When an issue comes up that you can deal with you either say it's the federal minister's fault or you turn it over to the PEIFA. Minister, when are you going to stand up and take some charge of your department yourself?

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

Mr. LeClair: Madam Speaker, the PEIFA is an entity that is an organization for the fishermen.

Fishermen pay dues to belong to the PEIFA, and the dues are \$100 or \$125. I don't know if, in actuality, they're charging \$200 for the crab allocation or the crab draws. But that's between the PEIFA and DFO. If DFO wants to change those conditions or put restrictions on them so that the PEIFA has to bring down that charge for the draw, they can do that. I don't have any jurisdiction there.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Psychologist shortage

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There's a severe shortage of psychologists in the province. To the minister of health: What are you doing to fix this position?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We recognize there is a shortage within the system of psychologists. Like other health professionals, our recruitment and retention office is doing what we can to recruit those positions right now.

We have approximately half of the positions that are vacant and we are recruiting those. We do recognize there's a bit of wage differential between the department of education and the Department of Health and Wellness. So we are working towards that.

There are, obviously, issues around the retention issue and recruiting. But we are working towards that, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Learning disability assessment times

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To the same minister. One of the most severe shortages is actually in the area of assessment for learning disabilities. The question to the minister: What are you doing to help reduce times and hopefully eliminate the problem here?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Just so we're clear, though, there are psychologists within the Department of Health and Wellness but there's also in the education and early childhood. So just to make the differential with that, with those professionals.

Again, a lot of our psychologists within our department are at, for example, perhaps the Hillsborough Hospital, the QEH, within our institutions as well.

Maybe the leader can sort of frame the age bracket, in terms of learning disabilities, that she is - in regards to her question.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I can actually throw that question to the minister of education because it's really in the school system.

Thank you.

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

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

Learning disabilities are a very serious neurological disorder that can range from mild to severe. The allotment for and the hiring of school psychologists is done through the boards. We recognize through the media this week that there has been a focus on the wait times. As a department, I'm very interested in looking at continuing to work through.

Right now, we're working on a learning disability strategy which is a multi-action plan. Through that planning we'll be looking, immediately, at the health human resource challenges and the number of

psychologists that are hired by the boards.

We'll also be looking at early identification and intervention as part of the five-year-olds coming into the public school system. Just recently we implemented the early year evaluation. Vehicles and tools that will provide the school system to provide more efficient access to individuals and families.

It's a very serious issue. The wait times that I'm hearing from the boards are, right now, a concern. I'm very interested, as the minister, to work at implementing a strategy to support them and to continue to find ways to bring supports into the classrooms.

As a former educator I'm very familiar with assessments. I used to administer assessments as a resource teacher and a school counsellor. They were very labour-intensive. The WISC-IIIs are a very extensive assessment and only can be done by qualified, certified psychologists. We are looking at ways that we can reach students and provide the support.

But I do want to clarify, when an assessment is in the queue to be done, there still are constant interventions for children in this province. We don't want to give the impression that children are waiting for resources and interventions while the assessment's being done. So it's a very important point.

The assessment does reinforce the investments that are being made, which are already being done.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Psychologist shortage (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you,

Madam Speaker.

To, probably, the minister of finance on this one. We heard from the minister of education - some of the issues around the psychologists - the minister of health. But one of the big issues that she identifies, and everybody else is aware of, is the issue of wages.

Now, to the minister of finance. We know that you've supported wine and beer experts. You certainly supported all kinds of office renovations. This week I've learned now that Regis and Kelly are coming to the province. What are you doing directly to ensure the psychologists' wages are increased so that we can attract and keep people here?

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

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

I'm very proud to stand in the House today and inform the Leader of the Opposition that health and education were the two departments that got increased funding from our department. One in the order of 4.9% and the other in the order of 6.2%, as we continue to usher in our belief on how this province should be run properly.

One of the things that we stand very strongly on is ensuring that we have enough professionals in place to have Islanders receive the services they need. There is not a shortage in psychologists only in Prince Edward Island, and it's not only because of the wages that are being offered. Psychologists are in high demand and in short order right across this country.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the

Opposition, final question.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

To the same minister. What exactly are you doing to negotiate an appropriate wage to help attract psychologists to PEI and to keep them here?

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

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

It's very important for everyone in this Legislature and listening today that there is a very firm process in place with regards to how classification takes place in our system. The Public Service Commission has a full classification review that goes on within certain sectors in our public service. If and when there are certain market adjustments that need be made, they take a look at that inside the classification service.

They are always fully aware of what is taking place right across the Atlantic region and, of course, right across this country. If there was such a huge discrepancy, there would be adjustments inside the classification orders. We continue to strive - always - to be competitive in the professional market.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (II)

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

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

I want to recognize the hon. Hunter Tootoo from Nunavut. Hunter is in town today. He came down to review our energy corporation, to review our wind farm and our hydrogen village. He is also in charge of the energy corporation, the housing corporation and the homeless. I met with him when I was up there. Very smart individual. We're going to try to sell him some of our technology.

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, too, would like to get up and welcome Hunter Tootoo to the gallery today. Hunter, the last number of - about 10 years we've been on public accounts together and we've travelled pretty well coast to coast in this province as far as - and he likes the odd golf game too.

The last government in Nunavut Hunter became a Cabinet minister and I congratulate him on that. I understand he's here to meet with the minister of energy this week dealing with the energy proposals for his own area. We welcome you here. Hopefully we can make the weekend enjoyable, and I look forward to talking to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin

Premier Ghiz: *Madame la présidente, j'aimerais souligner aujourd'hui la*

collaboration entre le gouvernement provincial et la Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin. La SSTA représente la communauté acadienne et francophone ici à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Elle est un partenaire important pour nous, surtout dans le cadre du Groupe de travail conjoint.

Madam Speaker, I would like to highlight the collaboration today between the provincial government and la Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin. The SSTA represents the Acadian and Francophone community here on Prince Edward Island. They are an important partner, especially within the framework of the Joint Working Group.

This Joint Working Group includes government and community representatives. They are responsible for putting together a long-term development plan for the Acadian and Francophone community.

Ce Groupe de travail conjoint se compose de représentants gouvernementaux et communautaires. Ils sont responsables de l'établissement d'un plan de développement à long terme pour la communauté acadienne et francophone.

La SSTA mène présentement un exercice de planification stratégique. Les résultats de ce travail contribueront à la planification du Groupe de travail conjoint. Nous sommes très fiers de pouvoir continuer notre collaboration avec la SSTA.

The SSTA is currently going through a strategic planning exercise. The results of this planning will contribute to the work of the Joint Working Group. We are very pleased to continue our collaboration with the SSTA.

J'aimerais profiter de l'occasion pour souligner le travail d'Edmond Richard qui termine son mandat de président de l'organisation. Edmond est un leader

respecté de la communauté acadienne et francophone. Sa contribution au cours des quatre dernières années a été significative et je lui souhaite bonne chance dans ses projets futurs.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work of outgoing chair Edmond Richard. Edmond is a well-respected leader in the Acadian and Francophone community. His contribution over the last four years has been considerable and I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours.

Merci beaucoup, madame la présidente. Thank you very much Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Heritage Fair

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, today, more than 220 students from across the province will be gathering at the Confederation Centre of the Arts for the 2010 Provincial Heritage Fair.

The annual Provincial Heritage Fair is an opportunity for Island students to demonstrate to teachers, parents, judges and the general public the heritage fair projects that they have put so much time and effort into creating.

The students' projects may be about local community history, historic buildings, events and achievements, family history or about individuals who have shaped our history in one way or another. As the

students research and develop their displays, they learn about the heritage that is so important to our province and our country. The students also gain a new understanding and appreciation for their own families and their local communities.

I want to take a moment to thank the many teachers and volunteers who worked with the students and organized heritage fairs in schools and communities throughout our province.

The provincial fair is sponsored by: the Department of Tourism and Culture; the Department Education and Early Childhood Development; the Confederation Centre of the Arts; and Canada's History Society. In addition, more than 30 local groups, organizations and businesses sponsor the fair through prizes and other donations. I would also like to thank the many volunteers who assist with planning for the fair, judging student projects and presenting afternoon workshops for students.

The Provincial Heritage Fair is open to the public from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. today at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown. Everyone is invited to attend.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Minister's Summit on Learning

Mr. D. Currie: Madam Speaker, I rise today to officially announce the Minister's Summit on Learning this June 4th and 5th at the Delta Prince Edward in Charlottetown.

So much is happening in learning in our One Island Community. Moving kindergarten

into the public school system has been described as one of the most ambitious and exciting educational initiatives in this province, and we are almost there.

Creating an action plan for early learning is another significant and historic undertaking. Details of this important early learning initiative will become clearer during the next week.

These tremendous actions will have a significant and positive impact on learning, on our education system, and on the future of our One Island Community. We want our young people to have a vibrant future. We want them to have the opportunities that enable them to achieve their greatest potential.

The goal of our education system is to help students prepare well for the world of work and for life. This is a responsibility that belongs to each and every one of us in this One Island Community. My message has been very consistent. Education is a partnership: educators and students; parents and community; government; private sector and non-profit. We each have a role and a responsibility.

Every day we are influencing the future of our young people. How can we work together as a community to support them to reach their full potential in our One Island Community to ensure they are prepared for life in the 21st century?

The Minister's Summit on Learning will begin the most significant educational conversation we have ever held as a One Island Community. What do we want our students to know and be able to do when they leave our public school system? What do we want them to learn, and how do we want them to learn? This is an important conversation for all of us.

The voice of our partners is important, and I want them at the beginning of the conversation, not responding to decisions after they are made. The Minister's Summit on Learning will welcome educational leaders from early childhood to post-secondary, including administrators, students, parents, department and board staff and school trustees.

The Minister's Summit on Learning is the beginning of a conversation that will lead to a new landscape for learning in this province. This is great news for our One Island Community and our One Island Future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Dialysis

Ms. Bertram: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Dialysis is a life-sustaining treatment required by individuals whose kidneys can no longer function as a result of kidney disease. Hemodialysis requires the use of a machine and direct access to the blood system. Treatments are usually performed three times per week, for four to six hours per treatment, by specially trained staff.

Historically, PEI relied on the Nova Scotia Renal Program for a broad range of renal services. Prince Edward Island's need to access service from Nova Scotia was primarily due to the insufficient renal client base in the province to warrant the establishment of a provincial program. This situation has changed dramatically over the past few years with an increased number of the Island's population experiencing renal disease.

To meet the needs of these Islanders, our government has increased in-province services for renal patients who require hemodialysis, resulting in more local service at our four dialysis sites, located in Alberton, Summerside, Charlottetown and Souris.

We have established a PEI renal clinic, with services provided to all dialysis patients, saving each patient a minimum of two visits annually to Halifax. This past year we have also recruited two nephrologists. Their practice and expertise have saved PEI patients from travelling to Halifax.

In addition, we have implemented a provincial renal clinic nurse position and we've increased the number of hemodialysis patients who can be treated within the province to 57, representing a 19% increase since 2008. Previously, all new hemodialysis patients were required to travel to Halifax and a one to week inpatient stay. Now, with our new expanded services, those patients can start their treatment program right here.

Last year our government committed a quarter of a million dollars to enable more Islanders to be treated here on the Island rather than having to travel out of province for these services. This year, our government is doubling - I'm proud to announce that in our Budget we're doubling - our commitment with funding of an additional -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bertram: - of an additional quarter million, bringing it to a half a million dollars to address hemodialysis needs. As a result of this additional funding, we will be able to continue expanding the dialysis program to accommodate the increasing demand for service.

In close, with this additional funding the Department of Health and Wellness is committed to ensuring that dialysis patients within our One Island Community receive the best possible health care and treatment services available.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

Mr. Vessey: Madam Speaker, during Question Period I referred to a letter from Tourism Charlottetown.

I'd like to table it today.

Speaker: Do you have a seconder hon. member?

Mr. Vessey: Seconded by the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, that the 2nd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

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

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

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I call on the Deputy Speaker to chair the Committee of the Whole House on supply.

Chair (Biggar): Page 51, hon. members, 52, 53. The hon. Minister of Environment, Energy and Forestry, starting on page 54.

The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to further consider the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

We will be doing Environment, Energy and Forestry. Minister, would you like to begin? We are on page 54. I'll just read the top of page 54.

Department Management.

Department Management. "Appropriations provided for the operation of the office of the Minister and Deputy Minister and centralized financial management, human resource management and administrative

services.” Administration: 45,300. Equipment: 4,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 9,200. Professional and Contract Services: Nil. Salaries: 959,900. Travel and Training: 25,600. Grants: 19,000. Total Department Management 1,063,200.

Any questions?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: We’d like to have the material that -

Chair: Oh, of course.

Leader of the Opposition: - the minister’s going to pass out.

Minister, do you want to bring anybody on the floor?

Mr. Brown: Not yet.

Leader of the Opposition: Not yet. Okay. Then, first before we get started -

Premier Ghiz: He’s like you, he was a bureaucrat for all his years -

Leader of the Opposition: Tell us where you’re trying to take this department. What’s your vision for the next year or two?

Mr. Brown: First of all, our government is committed - or the Government of Prince Edward Island has committed, first and foremost, to the environment and the energy and the forestry.

In terms of the environment, we have shown our leadership. In terms of the money that we have invested in the watershed areas - especially the increase from 120,00 to 750,000 to the watershed groups, and especially the money that has been put in through the ALUS program, close to \$1 million.

So I can assure all Islanders that all the money that is being collected through the *Beverage Containers Act* is being put back into the watershed areas. Because when you invest in the watershed groups, which is the people that are on the ground - I want to thank them for the tremendous amount of work they’ve done - all the volunteers out there, plus the coordinators of the watershed groups - they’ve done a tremendous job in improving our watershed areas.

But another major component in the watershed areas is our agricultural community, the people that own the property along these watershed areas. They are a key component of making sure that these watershed areas are protected and are improved. They do have a responsibility here. We as a society here have a responsibility to a system to do that. We’re doing a tremendous amount of effort in this area. I’m quite proud in terms of that.

As the Leader of the Opposition - the forestry has been experiencing a tremendous amount of pressure over the last few years, especially with the collapse of the US economy and the world economy. We’ve seen a tremendous decrease in the demand for wood products and fibre products in the world market. Therefore, our forestry industry is under extreme pressure. That’s one of the reasons we’ve looked at - we’ve got the forestry council and the environmental council working together to come up with a plan using our biomass on Prince Edward Island. I don’t only include forestry in the biomass, I also include agricultural crops that can be produced and sent there. That report is done.

Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Minister.

Mr. MacKinley: I didn’t want to interrupt him. Who I believe it is in the gallery. I haven’t run into much of him, but we spent quite a bit of time together on public

accounts, on many of our parliament trips, and Hunter Tootoo is from up north. So it's good to see him here today. He looks like he's been elected as long as I've been.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Continue, Mr. Minister.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Chair: Continue on.

Mr. Brown: Thank you very much.

Chair: And talk about forestry.

Mr. Brown: Back on to the forestry thing. In that report - will be being tabled Tuesday from the forestry council and the environmental council. I think this Legislature will be quite happy with the report that (Indistinct).

So therefore we're looking at creating an industry, or an economy, of biomass on Prince Edward Island. One of the things that we're hoping to see is that we're going to put to tender, over the next couple months, all of the government buildings or government properties throughout Prince Edward Island. Hopefully, then, people will come back in specific geographic areas and say: I'll take these 10 buildings or I'll take these five buildings and I'll produce the biomass and deliver it there and supply the heat.

It'll be a heat contract. It'll not be a contract in terms of just buying equipment. What we're going to be doing this time is that we're going to ask the bidders to provide BTUs, and as they provide us BTUs, we'll pay them on that. We're sort of hoping that we can - we've heard in the past that there's not a critical mass here in order to get his

industry going. What we've come up with is a province-wide tender in order to create a mass in order to get enough people working together, in order to make this work.

We see this as a great opportunity, too, for our forestry industry on Prince Edward Island, our agricultural industry on Prince Edward Island. Plus, it's a great industry for some of the manufacturers on Prince Edward Island. Plus, it will save taxpayers monies in terms of energy costs in some of these facilities.

We did one up in Evangeline. We purchased a piece of equipment up there. There's a supplier right now supplying chips to that facility. I understand that they have saved quite a bit of money in terms of that. It's a win-win situation for Islanders, plus the economy. I'm hearing great things from the committee that worked on this report.

In terms of the energy file, this is also in place with the forestry file. We've been working diligently hard on trying to get an energy purchase agreement established for the Province of Prince Edward Island. We continue to work on that. We were disappointed when the Hydro-Québec-New Brunswick deal didn't come to light. But we'll be continuing to work on it with other partners throughout Atlantic Canada and Hydro-Québec.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct) questions.

In regards to your environment portfolio, I noticed last year and this year too, again, the transportation department is investing a lot in the stimulus package - especially in the area of paving - with federal and provincial money. My question to you is - there are a lot of projections in the future, as energy prices increase, there'll be more cars coming off the road. So two parts to the question. How come we're not seeing more bicycle

routes? The second part is: When are we going to see actually the full transit system put in place? You know, if you're making \$9 an hour you can't afford vehicle and you're trying to get to work. I'm curious. This seemed to be an opportune time for environment to -

Mr. Brown: Yeah, and we've been working with the Trius service. We have a route going to Summerside right now. We have a route going around Kings County and heading to Souris, replacing the Enersave buses that you and I worked on. Worked out pretty good, I think. We continue to work with the TRIUS Tours and with the transit coalition in order to see how we can move that file along and see if there are any opportunities there in order to make an Island-wide transit.

We're working towards -

Leader of the Opposition: It just seems to have slowed down. I know two years ago there was some movement there, but last year, again, when the stimulus money was here, and this year on the bus transit - if you want to answer that a little bit more in terms of what slowed it down. Then, on the other one, in terms of, you know - bicycle trails, or areas for cyclists to use, especially in and around municipalities and the cities and coming in and the bypass etc.

Mr. Brown: On the transit issue, what slowed it down was the slowdown of the money coming in from Ottawa. We had the ecoTrust money which was \$15 million, which went a long way to assisting us in purchasing some equipment, some buses for the bus companies in order to use to bring the cost down to the user. Plus, they had the transit money which is dried up now. All that money was invested in capital equipment, both in the City of Charlottetown and through the PEI Energy Corporation, through the bus service to

Kings County and to Summerside.

We are re-evaluating these situations and seeing where the best cost could be. I commend the federal government for the money, for the credit system they have for bus passes. They allowed a credit system for anyone that has bus passes.

All I can say at this point in time is we'll continue to work with the groups and see if that can come to life.

Leader of the Opposition: On the second part in terms of the actual bicycle routes, I know when the bypass was going to be addressed there was a number of groups that really would have liked to have seen safe bicycle paths as part of that infrastructure project. Could you make some comments from a minister's perspective on the environment?

Mr. Brown: We had a meeting at the City of Charlottetown with some of the councillors and some of the public works department. At that time the concern was brought up on the bypass reconstruction, especially up from the Tim Hortons corner, from the bridge corner to the hospital, and one of the concerns was a bike pass and a sidewalk along there. I think that the city and the province - the minister of transportation has come up with a joint or a bicycle path, sidewalk path, all built in one.

Leader of the Opposition: Just curious, though, from an environmental perspective. Whether it's this or any of the work that you've been doing, if you're looking through the environmental lens, you'd kind of expect it's an opportune time to get some alternative transportation in there, especially for low income or for people that want to be healthy, or environmental groups. With all our construction there it doesn't seem to be addressed or a thought.

Mr. Brown: The minister of transportation and public works - we met with the city in terms of the bypass and there has been discussions on seeing if we can incorporate a bicycle path into the bypass along with the sidewalk. I also understand that transportation has purchased a shoulder machine in order to take the plainings and put them along the shoulders in order to assist - the bicycle go along those paths. Maybe the minister - bicycle paths along the transportation system on Prince Edward Island.

Mr. MacKinley: What about them?

Mr. Brown: Why aren't we building more?

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

Mr. MacKinley: Number one is the roads aren't designed for them. Number two is a lot of them have over on the shoulder, we're putting more millings and that on. We're going to continue - Jamie Ballem's out in the minister of tourism's riding right through to Stanhope or somewhere. Money.

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

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct) always ask these questions about tree planting or whatever. I really commend you for the concept of trying to create some biomass industry and doing public buildings, but in conjunction with that there needs to be a little more emphasis on planting trees on both private and public land.

I've noticed over the past while tree planting has decreased on Prince Edward Island. Is there any plan to re-change that and is there any chance that we can work out some arrangement with the federal government to plant more trees on Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Brown: Last year we had a great discussion in terms of trees and we're back to the department - some of the discussion. First of all, the request last year was to speed up the planting of trees, but we're behind schedule. I'm told that that backlog has been updated and is basically eliminated.

I'm told that the tree planting has decreased because the forestry industry has decreased so less trees are required to plant. I'm also told that in a lot of instances it's better to let natural regeneration occur, because sometimes its faster than going in with small trees from ourselves and we want the biodiversity out there in the woods.

Mr. Henderson: That's an argument I've heard lots of times from the department. I can drive along places in my riding and there is an awful lot of land that's just underutilized species of trees are regenerating. In my mind, if we could plant some trees in those areas or encourage property owners to develop their properties better, we'd be quicker to get a better biomass industry going and maybe a more value-added forest industry going.

I've always said before, there is a big difference between the forestry industry in eastern PEI and western PEI. Eastern PEI, because of its more hilly areas and things like that, there was less agriculture production and larger trees are there to begin with. In the western end it's flatter, there was more agriculture production up in that area and it hasn't come back into value-added tree species as quickly. It may take hundreds of years. So I think we need to really encourage planting more value-added trees and a diversified tree planting. I don't think we should be going with the monoculture, just one tree species in each location.

I encourage you to really argue with your

department to try to change that a little bit.

Mr. Brown: Then the discussions that we had during estimates last year. We had a great discussion with the department over your issues here. I'm quite happy that the land commissioner's report recommended that we build a new forestry building on the Upton Road in order for a new nursery. So we're awaiting that to see what money can come out of that in order to reconstruct that facility. I, like yourself -

Mr. Henderson: Do you think there needs to be another program to encourage private landowners to get more involved with making better use of their land? Like I said, I see an awful lot of acres of scrub, whether it's poplar, birch, alders, things like that. I don't see what's accomplished - I've seen it for 20 years. You drive by the same field, I don't think it changes a bit. I just think there needs to be maybe some encouragement there.

Mr. Brown: We had interesting -

Mr. Henderson: Because if we're going to have a biomass industry in the long term on Prince Edward Island, we need to start right at the seedling or where the tree starts to grow.

Mr. Brown: There was some discussion - maybe somebody can assist here. One of the reasons is that capital gains between the transfer of the land from the parents to the children or something along those lines. If they cut the trees down before the transfer occurs, there is less capital allowance or less capital cost, but capital gains has to be put on their financial statements when the transfer of property - we're investigating that to see if that is the case, you'll have a \$200,000 capital gain if you don't cut the trees, and if you do cut the trees it's 100,000 capital gain. We're going to look into that and see if that is the case.

We're told in some private cases that is the case. The private landowners are saying: Look, if you come in and plant my trees and I pass it on to my children, they also have a huge capital gains in terms of paying taxes when that land is transferred. Sometimes they prefer to have the trees cut down and then transferred.

Mr. Henderson: You might be on to something there because I've seen a lot of land transfer to non-resident landowners or whatever. Then all of a sudden there is a forestry company in there and they just clean-cut it and it's a non-resident landowner. Then the trees never get planted back again and it just grows up wild and naturally. I just don't think it's an effective way of utilizing your land and getting a biomass production back.

Mr. Brown: But that's one of the things that we have discussed in terms of the report that's coming out, is private landowners on Prince Edward Island and how do we encourage them to replant their forests. If we do get this biomass tender out and this biomass BTU tender going and we do get some uptake, then it will be incumbent upon the people that win the tenders in these particular areas to go out and work with the landowners in that area in order to make sure that they have the biomass that they need in order to use for the fuel that they will be required.

Mr. Henderson: Is there any way that you can encourage that as minister, though, or dictate that? So in other words, if a contractor was putting a bid on a certain property or a building to provide heat for and it's got a whole package there that says that it's now only providing wood chips, but it's also going to provide tree planting and it's going to provide forestry maintenance and the whole package. It may not always be the cheapest wood chip, but it's the whole package and how much money you can

return to PEI and invest in PEI by those companies.

Mr. Brown: That's a good suggestion that we'll take under advisement. When the report is tabled in the Legislature here, hopefully we'll hear comments back from the opposition and yourselves and the backbenchers and Cabinet colleagues in order to come out with an overall product.

I just see it as biomass and bioeconomy here. I think it's a great opportunity to get to assist rural PEI here. I'm getting some revenue out of a resource that we have. I know oil companies get mad at me, but my thought is that if we could have wood chip trucks going up and down the road, taking our biomass and using it to heat our hospitals and schools and manors and institutions, instead of oil trucks - why are we exporting \$444 million off Prince Edward Island in terms of buying foreign fuel? The US economy is working towards getting off foreign fuel and we should be too. It's a great opportunity.

Mr. Henderson: I think the day that happens I'll be one happy MLA in O'Leary-Inverness, for sure, so I encourage it.

My final question. I was to a conference one time on behalf of the government up in Ontario just around climate change and climate change adaptations. There was an agreement to try to work together as provinces, and each province to try to take its own particular projects and share that information.

I'm just wondering, is there anything that's ever happened with that as far as climate change adaptation to deal with all the different - because we've got a big issue with sea level rise and I'm dealing with coastal erosion. I'm just wondering where we're at with that.

Mr. Brown: We did sign an agreement a couple of weeks ago with the federal government in terms of RAC, Regional Adaptation Collaboration. You'll see in this year's budget there is \$290,000 put into it, professional services contract, and that is 100% offset by the federal government. This is a Maritime or Atlantic Canada initiative. The federal minister was down and the agreements were put together. We will do certain things with certain communities here on Prince Edward Island. Nova Scotia will do certain things.

So it's an approach. It's not an approach that PEI will be doing the same thing as Nova Scotia. I, again, thank the federal government for their efforts here because they came in and stepped in and said: No, let's not all duplicate things all through the provinces. PEI you do this, this and this, New Brunswick you do this, this and this, and all of these analyses will come together.

Mr. Henderson: So how do you see PEI spending those particular dollars? What are we going to spend it on here? Or how do you see it (Indistinct) -

Mr. Brown: I'll table you the documentation and the reports. There's some analysis on sea levels, there's coastal erosion, coastal sea levels, and analyses and studies done there.

Mr. Henderson: But are we going to do anything with any pilot projects? Is there funding in that to do pilot projects to prevent some of those things and to see how they work?

Mr. Brown: Very small amount of money for pilot projects, but if a project comes along that's good, we'll bring it forward to Cabinet and caucus and to the Legislature and hopefully get it approved.

Mr. Henderson: Okay. Good. That's it.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Would you describe the process that you're using for the requests for proposals for biomass and BTUs? What I'm looking for here, minister, is: Are there areas that when you're developing the criteria you can actually put it out in such a way that probably farmers, people that work in forestry, or small co-operatives, could take advantage of being able to compete? Maybe I was wrong, but I thought I heard you say that you were going for one tender Island-wide.

Mr. Brown: No. I apologize, Leader of the Opposition. What it is, we're going out to one, we're going to put one document out -

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. Brown: - that says: Here's all the government buildings -

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. Brown: - or here's all the government -

Leader of the Opposition: But people can -

Mr. Brown: - and here's all the BTUs that these buildings require -

Leader of the Opposition: Require.

Mr. Brown: - across PEI. We're hoping for proposals by individuals to come in to say: I'll take these 10 in this particular area, and here's how I'll manage it and here's how I'll put it together, and here's the BTU price for those 10 buildings.

Leader of the Opposition: Would you have anything in the request for proposal that would say priority given to collaboration between farmer, or several farmers, or people that work in the forestry, or small

companies that - because sometimes you know when those tenders go out it ends up - again, I'm thinking in terms of in Morell, there's the Morell high school, consolidated school and library. We have lots of good farmers around the area that could probably go after a contract like this.

But, when do you expect the request to go out?

Mr. Brown: The report will be tabled on Tuesday.

Leader of the Opposition: This Tuesday?

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: The closing date for that will be?

Mr. Brown: No, this -

Leader of the Opposition: Oh, the report goes first?

Mr. Brown: First of all, I asked - there was concern there - is there enough biomass and what should we do in terms of, (Indistinct). There's a lot of discussion out there: Do we have enough forests for this? I know some other provinces, Nova Scotia right now, they've had a biomass report and I have their report. There's some concern that: Will Nova Scotia or New Brunswick biomass be shipped somewhere else to be used somewhere for biomass?

Leader of the Opposition: Sure.

Mr. Brown: That's a major concern. They were saying: How do we protect against that? They're looking into that.

What we did here was to have the Public Forest Council and the Environmental Advisory Council, which I want to thank them, to go out and study: Do we have the

biomass? If we do have the biomass, what has to be done in terms to move this process along and what kind of rules should we put in place for the forestry industry or the agricultural in terms of not just going out and clear-cutting everything, burning everything, and leaving it? The tender, or the project, will have to be sustainable. Whoever puts packages in will have to say - that's another reason why we went and said: You will be - we're buying BTUs, we're not buying equipment, so we're not going to have people just sell us a bunch of equipment and then we go out and, as a government, basically buy the wood, have to find the wood, and these things.

If they buy the units they're responsible for providing the sources for those units, and I just see a great collaboration between these developers and the farm community. They're going to need product, they're going to have to work with the agricultural community, and they're going to have to go to these private landowners that own forests, and say: Look, can we do this? Can you grow this?

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. So when that report comes out, then, that's going to talk about probably which grass, straw, a whole variety that can be used in biomass?

Mr. Brown: Yes. We're looking at anything at all.

Leader of the Opposition: So you're looking at some products in aquaculture? Like, sea lettuce is a huge problem in the public oyster fishery, and to my knowledge not a lot has been done yet to extract the sea lettuce and perhaps dry it. Maybe it's another product that could be used in biomass. Especially in the Prince County area it's a huge issue.

Mr. Brown: You have a good point.

Leader of the Opposition: So, my question to you: Have they explored some of these other alternatives? If it has to do with climate change, and a whole variety of things, like, our waters are warmer, so we're actually growing more.

Mr. Brown: Again, the sea lettuce stuff is a great idea. I don't know.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. Brown: If it's a great product that can be used - I understand there's a person up in Tignish using -

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct). They've tried to harvest manually -

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

Mr. Henderson: - and whatnot, and I know there's actually some mechanized sea lettuce harvesters. It's just that -

Leader of the Opposition: There's a proposal (Indistinct) of fisheries to actually develop and design a new piece of equipment that's Island made to actually extract the sea lettuce. There's two, there's Joe (Indistinct), there's work that Joe's using, but this is a different product.

Mr. Brown: Oh, okay.

Leader of the Opposition: Now, he may have an interest there, too, but I'm just curious, and again, if there are products that come on because of climate change, etc., as long as we're still looking, here may be an opportunity. How broad was the piece of work that's going to be announced on Tuesday?

Mr. Brown: Okay.

Chair: Okay

Mr. Brown: Just on climate change, it's interesting, there has been an analysis done that BQ days, is it?, yeah, or degree days, and PEI has moved down the level to the Annapolis Valley. We're moving down, we're getting close, or our climate is getting close to -

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct). In terms of heat units, and frost-free days, do you actually have material on that, and if you do, could you present it to MLAs?

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Because it's really good for all our constituents.

Mr. Brown: We'll have that. That'll come out. I was told the other day that the analysis was done over a 10-year period and we're down a couple points, getting closer to the equator -

Leader of the Opposition: That really impacts on what you can grow, right? So it's valuable information.

Mr. Brown: That's why the department of forestry is looking at different -

Leader of the Opposition: Species.

Mr. Brown: - species that can be grown in terms of that new environment.

Leader of the Opposition: With that report, and then I'll let it go to, does it also include microclimates?

Mr. Brown: What's that?

Leader of the Opposition: Microclimates within the area. Like, we have, although we have one climate, right? There's three or four areas, again, West Prince, Arlington Orchards, they grow pears very successfully here, and apples. But for many years people

thought pears would not be able to grow here. So I'm just curious, with that piece of work that's coming out, have they identified other -

Mr. Brown: As soon as I get it, I'll give it to you.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. Brown: What you're discussing today, they'll be listening to what you discussed today, and hopefully they'll have something in there for you.

Leader of the Opposition: Great. I think every member probably would like to have it.

Mr. Brown: Yes. It's an important discussion.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Our committee on agriculture and forestry, we had a proposal from a gentleman, and I can't remember his name now, but it was on forestry, and he said there was a program, federal dollars, there was a \$7 million federal program that we failed to tap into and that other provinces got into it and we didn't. It passed us by.

Minister, wouldn't that have been a good way to put money into replanting of trees? Because the member from O'Leary and I, we've been talking. Last year we had quite a conversation on tree planting, and moving forward. But none of this \$7 million was tapped into by our province. How come?

Mr. Brown: I'm not (Indistinct) west. That was a community adjustment program. The federal program that was put in place to assist community adjustments, and for

Atlantic Canada, it was decided both federally and provincially, at those different levels, it was decided at those provincial levels that it would be used for the lobster industry, most of that money.

I heard your discussions in the committee, and we did get a briefing out back on it. I was told basically the allocation in that area was to be used for the (Indistinct) fishery.

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct), but we never touched the fund.

Mr. Brown: Oh, yes. A lot of the community -

Mr. Bagnall: Not on PEI we didn't.

Mr. Brown: All of our money went to the lobster -

Mr. Bagnall: There was \$7 million.

Mr. Brown: - went to the lobster industry.

Mr. Bagnall: Apparently there was \$7 million that wood producers, or wood horticultural people, say that never got tapped into. The only provinces that got some was New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, that we didn't tap into this fund at all.

Mr. Brown: I, yes, no, I heard your discussions in committee. I heard the amount of money that was put in.

Mr. Bagnall: You have a briefing note on that, do you, minister? Would you -

Mr. Brown: I'll table it (Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: No rush.

Mr. Brown: The big concern - and I agree, I was extremely disappointed. I said: I hope that we did not miss out on any money. They came back and told me that under the

Community Action Plan it was decided federally that most of the money for PEI would go to the lobster industry, and that's where it went. Into the marketing programs. Because they said our -

Mr. Bagnall: No, this was forestry funds. This was a forestry program that they talked about.

Mr. Brown: If you look at the program, there was several issues that could be used. Forestry was one of the criteria. Fisheries was another criteria. Basically it was any community that was affected by the economic downturn. It was decided that the community that was most affected by the economic downturn was the fisheries and all of that money went into that.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay. Would you - you have some -

Mr. Brown: I'll get you a note on it.

Mr. Bagnall: - you table that for me?

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Chair: Moving on to the estimates. We've read the Department Management section.

Any questions under the first section?

Mr. Bagnall: Has it been read?

Chair: Yes, it has.

Mr. Bagnall: Okay.

Chair: Any questions? Under the first section?

Leader of the Opposition: Under maintenance service and supplies.

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: All the computer repairs and maintenance and stuff like that, did you look at maybe purchasing new equipment? It just seems like you have a lot of expenses there. Is that one computer, 10 computers?

Mr. Brown: For last year, materials and supplies, \$11,000. Repairs and maintenance for services of printers and faxes. Printing, \$3,800 for advertising and promotion Environmental Week. Environmental art contest, Earth Day and Remembrance Day wreathes were purchased. Equipment rentals, photocopiers on the fourth floor, and books and subscriptions of \$2,900 was spent. The computer stuff, we depend on ITSS -

Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Mr. Brown: - and whatever they recommend to us and then we just pay the bills. So if they come up with a better solution, we'll abide by that.

Leader of the Opposition: So, right now, it looks like you're just going to continue to do repairs and maintenance, rather than -

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: When was the last time you had new computers?

Mr. Brown: I think I'm still working on the computer I took over from opposition myself. When they need to be - ITSS has a computer contract -

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you. Okay

Mr. Brown: - and they refresh the computers every couple years - every three to four, five years.

Leader of the Opposition: Five years.

Mr. Brown: Ours hasn't been refreshed yet -

Leader of the Opposition: In a while.

Mr. Brown: - but they will be.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. Brown: Some equipment in there that has been purchased - some technical equipment needs to be done sometimes - advanced colour printers, in order to show the topographical when they're printing out stuff.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. I have no problem with it. It's just that I was curious as to why.

Chair: Anything else?

Leader of the Opposition: Do you want to talk a little bit about your out-of-province travel?

Mr. Brown: Mine? Sure. Where's mine?

Leader of the Opposition: It's actually the deputy minister and people in your department.

Mr. Brown: The deputy's out-of-province travel -

Leader of the Opposition: It's number six.

Mr. Brown: Yeah. He went to Toronto, Canadian council of ministers. We were in charge of the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers, so the deputy spent a lot of time taking that file under.

Leader of the Opposition: Being chair, right.

Mr. Brown: That now has been passed over to Newfoundland so they're in charge of that now. So there'll be less administration, or less duties in that area, because we're not in charge of that organization anymore.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure.

Mr. Brown: He went to Toronto for the Canadian council. He went to St. John's for the Atlantic ministers of Environment; Kingston, Ontario; and Ottawa, ministerial working meeting on climate change. He goes to the deputy minister's meetings and hears ideas and comes back with those ideas and -

Leader of the Opposition: Sure.

Mr. Brown: - tries them out.

Leader of the Opposition: There's one trip here for ALUS to Winnipeg. You know we often talk about this program in the Legislature, but this goes way back to Delta Waterfowl, does it not? John MacQuarrie was one of the, probably, people that saw really a good opportunity here to do something different and unique, probably as far back as 2003-2004.

Mr. Brown: We have to give a lot of credit here to John MacQuarrie in this particular area, ALUS program. He was the one that basically put it together for the Province of Prince Edward Island. He was the one that pushed the department in order to implement it. When we came in with the *Beverage Containers Act*, and the commitment was made by the province that any money would be sent right back to the watershed areas, we looked at allocating it, and basically the allocation for the *Beverage Containers Act*, is pretty well split between the environmental groups, or the watershed groups that are doing the repairs in the streams and rivers, and the agricultural owners of the property, and that's the ALUS

program.

I know when it was under the department's wing it was a tremendous incentive for the agricultural community to get onboard with the department of environment and with the watershed groups in order to start fixing up our rivers and streams. It's been a great incentive. I guess the minister of agriculture - do you want to comment on it?

I have to admit, John MacQuarrie was the one that brought it Prince Edward Island, and I understand we were one of the first, if we are not still the first, in Canada for the ALUS program.

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

Mr. Webster: Thanks, Madam Chairperson.

The ALUS program, we would be the first province in Canada to have an Island-wide program. I'm pretty proud of that. It was conceived by discussions with Manitoba at the outset, and from there it grew and it grew in the Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry. Now it's administered through the department agriculture, but it's a great program. It's one piece of the puzzle that actually will allow us to preserve and use our environment out there and use our agricultural land base and so on, so it's a win-win all the way around. I think it's a great program.

Chair: Anything else?

Leader of the Opposition: John, with another piece of this work, at the same time, was doing quite a bit of work with Delta Waterfowl.

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: Is your department doing work with both Delta and

Ducks Unlimited?

Mr. Brown: I don't believe we have an agreement with Delta, but yesterday we signed an agreement with Ducks Unlimited in order to - the Province of Prince Edward Island has committed \$300,000 towards Ducks Unlimited. Ducks and the federal government, again, has a program that cost shares the watershed areas. It's a great agreement, because the province puts up \$300,000, the feds put up \$300,000, and I believe contributions from Ducks Unlimited brings another 400,000, and that's a million dollars. That money will go directly back into the watershed areas in order to improve them, and they're doing a tremendous job.

If Delta came along with a deal like that, I think we'd take it also.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah. Delta usually gets into more of the research, and sponsors graduate students, etc. I'm just curious on that. Would you be asking your deputy to explore relationships there, and especially where we do have serious environmental issues affecting PEI in so many ways - whether it's the climate change. When we see other areas in the world that are having terrible weather patterns, etc., I'm just curious, with an organization like Delta Waterfowl, whether there's an opportunity there for the province to do some things uniquely and maybe sponsor a graduate student or two.

Mr. Brown: I'll ask the deputy to look into that. Sure.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Investigation and Enforcement.
"Appropriations provided to carry out investigations and enforcement pursuant to environmental and wildlife legislation

(*Environmental Protection Act, Unsightly Property Act, Automobile Junk Yards Act, Pesticides Control Act, Wildlife Conservation Act, Fisheries Act, Migratory Birds Convention Act (Canada)* and supporting Regulations)." Administration: 30,900. Equipment: 73,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 18,200. Professional and Contract Services: 1,500. Salaries: 552,400. Travel and Training: 93,200. Total Investigation and Enforcement: 769,200.

Questions?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Would the minister sort of give us an update on all the activities in this section?

Mr. Brown: Yeah. We have some statistics we'll table for you, in terms of the number of tickets, warnings they've issued.

We have five conservation officers. We have four pesticide inspections, a seasonal officer, and a senior conservation officer. Now, I know a lot of the time there's a lot of criticism about these conservation officers and maybe some of the tactics they use. I just want to state for the record that these individuals do a good job. They have a tough job. They're out there making sure that a number of acts - 16 in all - are enforced.

We have the *Environmental Protection Act*, the *Wildlife Conservation Act*, the *Natural Areas Protection Act*, the unsightly, *Pesticides Control Act*, trespassing act, *Planning Act*, *Automobile Junk Yards Act*. They're the ones that are involved in keeping our Island pristine and making sure that our watershed areas and our environment are protected, and my hat goes off to them.

I just want to say I was extremely

disappointed. I attended a national union or national federation union meeting, and the criticism that was put upon some of these officers, I think, was extremely unfair. They're just doing their job. They're doing their job out there. They're enforcing the acts that this Legislature has chosen to put in place, which I believe are good, and we have a great number of officers out there working to protect the environment of Prince Edward Island.

Quite frankly, if it wasn't for their efforts and their work, and their commitment to this, our environment and Prince Edward Island would greatly suffer. My hat goes off to the officers and the inspection people out there, and the chief conservation officer. In terms of the work they do, they do a tremendous amount of work. They get a lot of criticism. I'm impressed by how they deal with the criticism and they continue to do their work. I just have a lot of respect for them.

Leader of the Opposition: Just in that area, especially from the agriculture community - not all the community - you raised the issue - was it at the NFU?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, the NFU.

Leader of the Opposition: Just curious. What, from the departmental perspective, are you doing to try and help educate the public? I think for a number of people, in an ideal world, we picture that things are still progressing the way they may have been 20 years ago, 30 years ago, but I'm not sure if everybody realizes - I'm getting to the issue of an officer carrying a gun. That's the big one that we often get calls about. People are really not thinking that's necessary. Do you want to make any comments there?

Mr. Brown: Sure.

Leader of the Opposition: What are you

doing to help the public realize that, from the department's perspective, it's a necessity?

Mr. Brown: I agree. The issue of the guns has come up a number of times. We have to understand that these conservation officers - they're not only provincial officers out there. There's 22 federal officers out there that carry guns also. So sometimes, people will see officers coming to their property and they'll they're provincial officers when, in fact, they're federal officers doing an investigation too. But both, again, they work together quite good.

Number one, you have to understand that they enforce the *Environmental Protection Act*, the *Wildlife Conservation Act*. During hunting season - I know a lot of people have expressed, maybe they can just clear the guns during hunting season and they don't need otherwise. We looked into this. We looked into what we could do better in terms of that. Number one, emphatically, guns are not going to be taken away from officers any time of the year. That's a commitment that I've made and I don't think this Legislature should ask our officers to do away with their protection.

Leader of the Opposition: Just on that, do you have - again, you said you were going to table stats. You know, how many calls? For example, I'm sure, in child welfare, people would be surprised just how sometimes upsetting a situation may be that requires a different type of intervention.

I'm just curious from this perspective, when you're so convinced that you require guns, what are the working conditions under which that's a necessity and would this be on a daily basis or the fact you don't know? Were there 10 high-risk interventions done last year? Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

Mr. Brown: We do have some complaints in and our officers have been harassed in some times. Some of those cases are going through the court now, which I'll let the courts decide who was right and who was wrong in those situations.

But the officers feel that - and health and safety is a requirement of our officers to wear protective gear in order to - when they go into a situation.

You have to understand - I know you would - some of the times they're going into a situation where there's no other houses around. There's like acres and acres. Could be a mile away. They're going down a lane and seeing somebody. There's no one in the vicinity. No one close by to see that, okay, there's something going on over there. We better call a neighbour who then call the RCMP to come and try to protect them. They're going into situations where no one could see a problem occurring.

There was an incident out west there where the RCMP went down to look in someone's barn and there was a couple of officers killed in that situation. I'm not saying that could happen here. But, again, you look at situations like that. Our law enforcement officers are out in situations. I agree with you - like you said about some family situations. Sometimes an officer - sometimes some of these environmental things or unsightly properties or some situations that have occurred, that is a result of maybe some problems in the household itself.

They're going into a situation that they really don't know. It is an environmental issue. We had a complaint. We're going over. But are there other circumstances that are going on?

I know, myself, I'd be kind of nervous going down a half a mile lane or something and not really knowing the situation you're

going into. I agree with you. Some of our social workers, some of the cases that they have, some of the situations they find themselves in must be very difficult.

I know when I worked in the City of Charlottetown, the police officers there, they say: You're right - some tough situations. Sometimes it would be easier to be in a big drug bust because you know the situation you're getting into. A lot of the time, a lot of social workers plus officers don't know the situation they're getting into. But with the social workers, I would assume that if they did have any indication or any problems, that they would call police and protection there.

Again, I know there's a lot of discussion over the guns. We're not going to entertain the removal. But what we have done, I'll tell you right now, if it's a complaint about buffer zone regulations or crop rotations, something that can't change, what we've instituted now is we call them. We say: We have a complaint or we have a concern, we're coming out to your property at such and such a time, we will be there at such and such a time and we will be wearing our outfits.

Leader of the Opposition: So people know ahead.

Mr. Brown: At least we've changed that so they don't show up -

Leader of the Opposition: Unannounced.

Mr. Brown: Somebody cutting a tree and two officers showing up, unnoticed or just out of the blue and saying: What are you doing? For situations like that, we've instituted please call first. Please talk about it or what's going to happen. We're going to be out in two hours or in a half an hour. Put it this way. We believe if they cut buffer zone trees down, pretty hard to nail them

back up in a half an hour before the officers got there.

Leader of the Opposition: Just a follow up on this one and then I know you're trying to go.

In addition to that, when you're talking about the safety of both the person that's being investigated and the officer or whatever, there's a number of areas in the province that you have no cell phone reception. So what kinds of checks and balances does the department do? You're calling ahead, you're sending two officers together. But I'm just curious because I know and I'm sure everybody in this House knows there's lots of areas in the province that there's no cell phone usage.

Mr. Brown: They have other communications, radio communications. One of the things the minister of education and Attorney General was saying the other day, in terms of Maritime Communication Systems, the \$50 million that the federal government put up to redo the communication system throughout the Maritimes will go a great way in assisting that.

I believe they have other devices for communications: cell phones, mobility. They have other equipment available to them in order to communicate in terms of that. I'd hope that if they were going into a situation where there was no cell phones or anything like that, they'd bring other officers with them or they'd call the RCMP with them at the same time.

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

Mr. Watts: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, what about dogs that are running at large or causing a problem in the

community? Is that under your department?

Mr. Brown: I think we do have the *Dog Act*. I think we repealed the *Dog Act*. Did we? It's under agriculture. Do you still have the *Dog Act*, agriculture? Yeah. What are you doing with the *Dog Act*?

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

Mr. Webster: We are responsible for, I believe, the *Dog Act*, and the humane society operate as agents for our Department of Agriculture.

Chair: Any further questions under Investigation and Enforcement?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Department Management: 1,832,400.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Environment.

Administration. "Appropriations provided for the management of the Environment Division." Administration: 50,000. Equipment: 400. Materials, Supplies and Services: 29,200. Professional and Contract Services: 34,800. Salaries: 250,000. Travel and Training: 53,000. Grants: 115,000. Total Administration: 532,400.

Question under that?

Leader of the Opposition: Just in terms of - you've got one of the expenses, Environment Canada, water monitoring. Tell us what you're doing there.

Mr. Brown: There's a contract, I understand, with Environment Canada, which we help - there are several sites set up throughout Prince Edward Island in order to measure water in those particular areas in

order to ensure that our water quality is still up to standards with Environment Canada.

We have a number of programs provincially also. We'll be introducing, next week I think - hopefully next week - we'll be going online with our nitrate levels and you'll be able to go online and find out what the nitrate levels have been in the particular areas on the Island, what tests have been done. So that'll be coming out next week.

We do assist with the federal government here, monitoring water on Prince Edward Island.

Leader of the Opposition: Two more questions.

One, I'm not sure if it's in this section or when, but I want to get an update from you. Last fall when you were on the floor of the House and you passed the pesticide act, we talked about putting a committee together that would monitor and perhaps come up with some suggestion for golf courses. If it's not in this section, I just want to make sure you update in terms of how that committee is going a little later, then.

The other question, for this section, I notice you keep putting in Revolution Media. Who are they? It talks in several sections where the cost is done with four divisions. Who are they?

Mr. Brown: Revolution Media, one thing they did is the redesign of our website, total cost \$10,000, with four divisions. It's important that we communicate what services are available to the public and that our website is constantly updated and the most relevant information is available online for people to see. We've had Revolution Media coming in and doing some of our designs.

Leader of the Opposition: Who are the

principals of that company?

Mr. Brown: I'm not sure, I'll get you that.

Leader of the Opposition: Would you get that, please?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, sure.

Chair: Anything else?

Leader of the Opposition: No.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Watershed Management. "Appropriations provided to administer groundwater and surface water quality and quantity monitoring programs including pesticide monitoring; conduct estuary water quality investigations; provide technical and financial support to community-based organizations through the Watershed Management Fund." Administration: 7,400. Equipment: 2,300. Materials, Supplies and Services: 12,900. Professional and Contract Services: 38,800. Salaries: 611,400. Travel and Training: 49,900. Grants: 920,000. Total Watershed Management: 1,642,700.

Questions?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Just on this one. Again I go back to the sea lettuce issue that's in lots of areas across the province, but especially Western Prince Edward Island, West Prince. Is somebody in your department working directly with, say, the people that fish in the public oyster fisheries on this issue?

Mr. Brown: Yeah. You'll see a little later on we get total funding from the federal government for the oyster fisheries, shellfish program. That's 100% offset and they work with the - it's the enforcement people come

back with the shellfish.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm not thinking of the enforcement side as the actual side on the environment. Again, I'm not sure what the public oyster fishery is worth these days. But again, going back to the oil spill that the US are struggling with, it's a real opportunity, unfortunately, but sometimes it's a crisis some place else, but it's an opportunity for PEI and our oysters. I'm just curious if someone is doing some work there right now.

Mr. Brown: There is one individual - I hate naming one of two individuals in the department because they all work (Indistinct) pretty good. But I understand that there is one down there that I see working very hard on the computer working on analyzing things and that's Cindy Crane. She's a biologist and I ask her questions once in a while and she's got the answers every time.

I think she was at a shellfish meeting there a few weeks ago. She was talking to me about it and how some of the concerns are coming out of there and some of the things she's going to be recommending. Cindy put up a report, what should we be doing. She seems to be a very intelligent person in my mind and working hard. She's committed to her job and I've asked her to put something together for me in this area.

She was talking about something about the shellfish industry. There was a meeting a few weeks ago -

Leader of the Opposition: With probably Mr. Bernard and a number of people from Tignish. It's a huge issue and there may be some potential on both sides to do something, especially while the market you're going to see is probably going to take off for our oysters again, which is a good thing.

Mr. Brown: That's one of the reasons I've asked the department and asked my Cabinet colleagues to look into in terms of public works and other areas, especially in shellfish areas to see if we can upgrade the outfalls into those areas, see what we can do in terms of putting up affluent in the water. That's one of the reasons I've asked the department of transportation to look at hooking the new jail and the trailer park - there are two out in East Royalty, there is two lagoons out there. I'm saying: Is there a way we could take those two lagoons off putting affluent right into the North River and to put it through the Charlottetown system, which would be level one or level two service? So they're investigating that right now. I'd like to see as much -

Leader of the Opposition: Would you keep us posted on that progress?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, sure.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Question, the hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, on the oysters part of it. There has been some mortality, especially in the Bedeque Bay, and they seem to blame it from silt that's coming in from Wilmot River, Bedeque, the Dunk River. What are you doing about that?

Mr. Brown: The shellfish industry is starting - they've always been concerned about their areas. Again, I can say that Cindy Crane has been out there with them, meeting with them, and I'm waiting for any analysis, or any recommendation she says we should be doing in terms of improving these areas.

I agree, we shouldn't have runoff from one

area affecting another industry. I think we all have to be together here. One industry cannot ruin another industry and we strongly believe in that. That's one of the reasons we have contributed more money to the watershed groups and to the ALUS program. Because we feel that runoff is a major concern and we don't want runoff occurring into our rivers and streams and then back down to the waterways and out to the strait in terms of choking off our (Indistinct) industry.

Mr. Bagnall: Has this been affecting the growth of the oyster industry?

Mr. Brown: Again, Cindy is working on that and she's coming up with something for us. Personally, and I'm no scientist and I'm not as smart as her in terms of biology, but that's an important industry. The shellfish industry is extremely important on this Island. Another industry shouldn't expect to have an effect on another industry to make their's better. I think each got to work together and each got to be protected.

I'm committed to improving the shellfish industry along the rivers and streams. That's one of the reasons we stepped in and talked about our rivers and streams and that's one of the reasons we have put together the ALUS program and the watershed program in order to improve those areas.

Now, we have a group of individuals out there throughout PEI, both volunteers and watershed coordinators, just tracking this stuff and sending the information back. Did the watershed alliance, which I must say is working extremely good. I've been to a number of meetings and I just can't believe how dedicated these individuals are. They're really taking their job really seriously and we're taking their opinions really seriously when they come back to us and tell us there are concerns there.

Again, on the nitrate levels, we are monitoring the nitrate levels. We will have a release hopefully next week in terms of the computerization of what nitrates are where, and people can go and see it.

Mr. Bagnall: How much testing have you been doing on the nitrates, minister?

Mr. Brown: I'll get you that report. A substantial amount of testing has been done.

Mr. Bagnall: Is the level increasing or decreasing?

Mr. Brown: As you know, hon. member, the previous administration initiated that there was nitrate report came out by the federal government. The Legislature acted extremely quickly in terms of that. There was a committee formed, a nitrate committee -

Mr. Bagnall: It was Judge DesRoches.

Mr. Brown: Yeah, and it was formed into a commission. Justice DesRoches went out and did a tremendous job in that area. He has issued a report, phenomenal recommendations in it, tough recommendations in it. We're now preparing an update to that report which, once it's done, we'll have it.

Mr. Bagnall: How many of the recommendations have been implemented?

Mr. Brown: I'll get you that. It's in the report that we're putting together. We're working on all recommendations, I can tell you, because it's an extremely important issue on Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Bagnall: But since the federal testing took place that triggered this commission by Judge DesRoches, can you tell me in the testing, are the nitrate levels gone up or are they gone down?

Mr. Brown: Again, I'll get you that report. I'd rather you see the whole nitrate commission report as one, because see what's happening in different areas here. Some areas it could be going up and some areas it could be going down.

Chair: Anything else?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Yes, Minister, when we're talking about the Dunk River and the silt and stuff there, Scales Pond has come out there, which was one of the major feeders into the Dunk as we go along coming down through. The pond is gone and the water pressure from the stream is not nearly as great as it was before, because of the hold back -

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Mr. Bagnall: - and the thing. Can you tell me: When are you going to put the dam back in?

Mr. Brown: We have the minister of agriculture from the area, but what I can say is when the dam did break, Fred McCardle was out there - a great person - I understand that there are different groups in the Scales area. I'm waiting from the recommendation of these groups and the environment. Some people tell me that it's better to leave it as it is and some people tell me to rebuild the dam. A decision hasn't been made yet.

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

Mr. Webster: Madam Chair, we do have a committee working with regards to the reconstruction, if you like, of Scales Pond.

It's a work in progress. We're hoping to have a staff person available in two or three weeks that will be out there looking for

partners and funding, and what's the best use, and what's the best reconstruction method at that site. It won't happen this year, but the actual reconstruction, it'll be for 2011. Now is the time to get the plan together and ready to go.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bagnall: What water groups are involved with that, minister?

Mr. Webster: Pardon?

Mr. Bagnall: What water groups are involved?

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

Mr. Webster: There's a committee made up of all the stakeholders from the community. We didn't want to leave anyone out, and we wanted to make sure everyone was at the table. So there are probably 10 groups represented, everything from the fire department to the Women's Institute to the International Children's Memorial Place people board.

We're leading it, but we want to get and develop community buy-in and community engagement so we get the right decision made for that situation. The community has come out whole-heartedly and said they want to reestablish the pond. So we have engineers available that are looking at that right now. Of course, the issue will be the funding surrounding that issue. And we -

Mr. Bagnall: I think that's a good decision, minister, and I think it's good for the Dunk River too, to reestablish the pond.

Chair: Any other questions under this section?

An Hon. Member: Carried.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Drinking Water Protection.

“Appropriations provided to administer approvals and compliance monitoring for central water and wastewater facilities and for the administration of the Water Well Regulations including approvals for high capacity wells. Also administer on-site sewage disposal system assessments, water quality investigations and other related services.” Administration: 5,100. Equipment: 9,400. Materials, Supplies and Services: 23,900. Professional and Contract Services: 10,000. Salaries: 562,200. Travel and Training: 48,600. Total Drinking Water Protection: 659,200.

Questions?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Minister, there seems to be a lot of travelling in that section.

Mr. Brown: Yeah. There's a lot of work in this section in terms of drinking water protection. This section's out there each and every day trying to make sure that our sewage disposal systems are working properly, that no breakdowns are occurring, or no potential breakdowns are occurring. We're ensuring that all the wells that are on Prince Edward Island are safe, and that the drinking water is safe. If any violations are occurring or any work needs to be done, these are the people that are out there doing it. They're an important section.

One of the good things we've done this year - no longer are you allowed to put septic waste out in the fields. That's been cancelled. Any product now must come to either Charlottetown or Summerside to be processed through the two plants. The

previous administration put in the manure -

Mr. Bagnall: Management.

Mr. Brown: - management system. That seems to be - it's starting this year, or fully functional this year. I think it's a great project that was done for the environment. I think the day has gone by when you just fill up your tank or truck or your tanker from septic systems and spread it on the field. No longer will that be occurring.

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah. Now this drinking water protection, minister, who's doing the testing now?

Mr. Brown: The drinking water?

Mr. Bagnall: Where is the testing on our drinking water being done now?

Mr. Brown: We have two - we have labs in the provincial building, in the Sullivan Building. Anybody can bring their water testing there. Any testing we do is done through that facility. There is a microbiology lab and a water lab, so we have a -

Mr. Bagnall: Is there a charge for that testing?

Mr. Brown: Yeah. There is a charge to individual testing.

Mr. Bagnall: What does that cost?

Mr. Brown: It's in the regulations. I can get you a copy of that. I'll get you a copy of all the fees for water testing. Or is it in our notes?

Mr. Bagnall: If you have it there - I don't need you to bring it back. If you don't have it right off, that's okay.

Mr. Brown: That's in revenue, but I'll bring

those numbers back.

Chair: Any other questions?

Mr. Bagnall: No, nothing from me.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

P.E.I. Analytical Laboratories -
Microbiology. "Appropriations provided for
the microbiological analyses of drinking
water, surface water and wastewater."
Administration: 3,200. Equipment: 12,300.
Materials, Supplies and Services: 56,300.
Professional and Contract Services: 45,600.
Salaries: 442,900. Travel and Training:
2,000. Total P.E.I. Analytical Laboratories -
Microbiology: 562,300.

Questions?

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir.

Mr. Bagnall: Where is this testing taking
place now?

Mr. Brown: This testing is being - well,
there are three labs. There are some private
labs. Or no, sorry, there aren't. We have the
lab on the fourth floor of the Sullivan
Building. I understand there's a lab out by
UPEI, or right across from McDonalds,
there's a lab there. Those do the testing. I
just want to -

Mr. Bagnall: Where's the other one then?

Mr. Brown: There's an agricultural one - or
a milk one, out in the - Gerald Street.

Mr. Bagnall: So where does it stand now on
the new lab? Is there anything being done on
that at the present time?

Mr. MacKinley: Over Bioscience lab out at
industrial park. (Indistinct).

Mr. Brown: There you go - he just released

it.

Look, we're investigating the possibility of
combining all the labs into one lab. We feel
it's extremely important that all the labs be
put in one lab, more or less, and that the
people be shared among the different
testing. We believe that that's a - number
two, it would go a long way to improving
services to the people of Prince Edward
Island.

Mr. Bagnall: You don't have to convince
me on that one, minister.

Mr. Brown: Okay.

Mr. Bagnall: I agree with you on that,
because we were trying to do that, and we
would have had it done now if we had been
there.

Mr. MacKinley: (Indistinct) Cornwall
(Indistinct).

Mr. Bagnall: But it would have been at
PVI, (Indistinct), at that time. The
remodelling and the work had started, and
then the minister of transportation closed it
down because he wanted it in his district.
But it would have been here other than that.

Mr. MacKinley: (Indistinct) do anything
(Indistinct).

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Leader of the Opposition: I have a
question. Question.

Mr. Brown: Let her have a - I got some
statistics.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: Order, please!

The minister has the floor.

Mr. Brown: You asked earlier, and I'll just table this right away. Some of the tests that were done - bacteria tests were 15,355 in 2008; 2009, 14,967; chemistry 5,355. This year there were 3,396.

An Hon. Member: Can you table that for us?

Mr. Brown: Yes, sir.

E. coli testing in Nova Scotia. E. coli, total chloroform, \$35 in Nova Scotia - no, \$35 in New Brunswick, 33 in Nova Scotia, \$55 private, and on PEI it's \$25. Chemistry is \$91 in New Brunswick, \$120 in Nova Scotia, and \$50 in Prince Edward Island.

I'll table that.

Chair: Do you want a copy of it and want the original back?

Mr. Brown: Was that in your briefing?

Chair: Okay, any further questions?

Leader of the Opposition: I -

Chair: Yes, I have you.

The hon. Member from Montague-Kilmuir, anything else?

Mr. Bagnall: No, that's fine.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition, under this section.

Leader of the Opposition: Minister, under this section, and actually the whole area of drinking water, last year there was a variety of emails circulating back and forth from different departments on the whole question on whether or not water coolers and bottled water should be used in comparison to tap water. I guess my question is - you know, you're confident that our water is safe.

When you think of plastic bottles it's an issue in pressure on the environment. What are you doing from government's standpoint to show some leadership here?

Mr. Brown: That's a good question. From the department of environment, we do not buy any more bottled water.

Leader of the Opposition: You did not?

Mr. Brown: We do not. But we encourage each and every department not to do so, but if they do it, it's up to their thing and we could look at a total ban but we're allowing people to be educated through - I'm 100% confident in the water that's coming out of this tap in the government buildings on PEI.

Leader of the Opposition: So does your department do presentations for the rest of government in terms of not just from a cost perspective, but from the fact that our water is good quality?

Mr. Brown: That's a good point. We'll start doing some education about government in that area.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, and I'd like you to do a presentation to opposition as well. Who would be doing those presentations?

Mr. Brown: We'll pick somebody from the department -

Leader of the Opposition: Maybe, you know, if government members want the same presentation, we could do it together if you'd like.

Mr. Brown: We'll have someone in the department prepare that, and it's a good idea. We'll prepare and we'll also put it on the website also, for all Islanders to see.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Top of page 56.

P.E.I. Analytical Laboratories - Chemistry. "Appropriations provided for the chemical analysis of drinking water, surface water and wastewater." Administration: 1,800. Equipment: 4,500. Materials, Supplies and Services: 60,400. Professional and Contract Services: 16,200. Salaries: 57,800. Travel and Training: 400. Total P.E.I. Analytical Laboratories - Chemistry: 141,100.

Questions?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Does the minister want to tell us what services are contracted out and why?

Mr. Brown: This budget covers the cost of laboratory services which cannot be carried out at the department lab and periodic audits of laboratory procedures, CAEAL proficiency testing prepared for the accreditation of our labs.

We have to get our labs accredited. Those are services that we have to contract out to an independent person or an independent organization that comes in to make sure that our labs are up to standard before we get certification. Similar to the hospitals.

Leader of the Opposition: So would that work be done by someone here in the province?

Mr. Brown: I'll get you who is responsible for those. I'm just told, here, it's about a \$14,000 contract for that service alone. I'll get you who does the testing.

Leader of the Opposition: Do you know if that service would be paid for each of the labs that we've been discussing? Or would that be an amount to cover all the labs?

Mr. Brown: They share the costs but I'll get you the total testing for all labs.

Leader of the Opposition: And just who did the work?

Mr. Brown: Sure, no problem there.

Leader of the Opposition: Do you do any work with any of the people at the vet school that would have expertise in these types of accreditation processes? I guess what I'm wondering: Is it something that's done through the private sector or is it something that could be done?

Mr. Brown: Just right off the bat, I would think that it would be a company that does labs all across the country. Maybe we could look at seeing if the vet college could do it, accredit the labs or -

Leader of the Opposition: Well, it's not the accreditation that you're paying for, right? It's just someone to come in to follow the protocols and make sure the checks and balances are in place so you can keep your accreditation up. You've never lost your accreditation?

Mr. Brown: Not that I understand.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Shellfish Program. "Appropriations provided to carry out an ongoing monitoring program in shellfish growing areas under a MOU with Environment Canada. The program supports the shellfish sector by providing improved access to timely data used to determine closures in shellfish growing areas." Administration: 1,600. Equipment: 29,200. Materials, Supplies and Services: 12,600. Professional and Contract Services: Nil. Salaries: 62,000. Travel and Training: 14,600. Total Shellfish Program: 120,000.

Any questions, hon. Leader of the Opposition?

Leader of the Opposition: Update us in terms of some of the work that this section's doing.

Mr. Brown: Sure. This program is 100% funded by Environment Canada for providing water quality monitoring of our shellfish area. In 2009, 3,775 samples were processed from 730 stations across Prince Edward Island. Each site was visited five times from May to October and the total includes a few additional samples which were taken to reopen temporary emergency closures.

Leader of the Opposition: So is this for the clam fishery, for quahogs, mussels, oysters, etc.?

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: We used to have a number of areas that would be shut down for lengthy periods of times and you'd see advisories put out. Were there last summer?

Mr. Brown: Any advisory put out? I'll have to get you that number. But one thing I've been told by the feds contracting it to the department of environment here on Prince Edward Island, sometimes it speeds up the process of re-opening and the testing can be done a lot quicker. Our staff can be out there a lot quicker to these sites, monitor these sites, and make sure that the proper testing is done and they're sent right back to the labs as quick as possible. We try to get those sites open extremely quick.

Sometimes - and I don't blame the federal government - sometimes it's just a - if your credit levels in the federal government are multi-tier, where we can just cut right through a lot of the tape -

Leader of the Opposition: I'm trying to think of which - there was an issue where one of the areas were shut down. Which one was it?

Mr. Brown: Yeah, there was one in the West River, I believe.

Leader of the Opposition: And that was with -

Mr. Brown: Hambly's.

Leader of the Opposition: What was the end result?

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

Mr. Brown: The person was charged. They pleaded guilty, as I understand it, and paid the fine. I've asked that facility to be closed and that they consider hooking up to the city.

Leader of the Opposition: To the city?

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: So that work's all done?

Mr. Brown: No, the work isn't done but they've been ordered. I signed a ministerial order for them to shut down that facility and hook up - \$300,000 project.

Leader of the Opposition: Sure. So that will be done when? Is there a time frame on that?

Mr. Brown: I'll get you that time frame. The decision's been made to take it off-line, take that particular -

Leader of the Opposition: They're cooperating with you.

Mr. Brown: A ministerial order has been issued. That's where I believe - that's why I've asked the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to look at the facilities at the jail, and there's a trailer park, also, out in East Royalty. To get those systems off. Because we have a 50 million or \$40 million on the bypass. Anything we can process through that should be processed through that same case in Summerside.

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

Mr. McIsaac: Minister, wasn't there another problem from that same area in January? I had heard rumours of that. Trying to get a confirmation on that. Was there another problem during the winter?

Mr. Brown: I'll get you that information.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Air and Hazardous Materials.

"Appropriations provided to conduct air quality and ozone depleting substances monitoring, hazardous materials transport monitoring, environmental emergency response, petroleum storage tank management, home heat tank management, inspections and respond to public complains and general information requests."

Administration: 7,700. Equipment: 13,700. Materials, Supplies and Services: 58,500. Professional and Contract Services: 11,000. Salaries: 482,200. Travel and Training: 57,500. Grants: 9,100. Total Air and Hazardous Materials: 639,700.

Questions?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Under professional and contract services there, last year you seemed to have a need to spend

quite a bit more than your projections were, and then you reduced it back. Do you want to tell us about that and why?

Mr. Brown: There was an oil spill at a private property in the Charlottetown area, or any area. Our staff goes out and investigates these areas, and Glenda MacKinnon-Peters is in charge, does most of the work here, along with her colleagues.

I find it extremely important that if the insurance companies - if there's a dispute between the insurance company - and we're trying to resolve this issue, if there's an oil spill at a house or a facility, and there's a debate over who should pay for it, the insurance companies are arguing over it and not wanting to pay, or not saying it's covered, I'm a strong believer that we have to react to the situation quickly in some of these cases.

In one particular case it was close to a school. A lot of children were in the area, around St. Jean Elementary School area, and there was discussions over who owns the property, what's wrong with the insurance, the people couldn't afford it, they were just letting the oil continue to leach into the ground. An order was issued to go in and clean it up. They didn't proceed with the cleanup so I ordered the department to go in and start the cleanup facility. We were recording all the bills, we were working with the insurance company to ensure that those bills were being paid. If not, I have no other choice but to put a lien against the property in order to pay those bills, and we're serious about this.

We're serious about the oil spills here, and especially with the tanks. If it's a major health issue and it's going to affect people in the surrounding area and no action is being taken, the department will move in and will clean up and will work with the insurance companies and with the property owner in

order to get the money back that we're owed. I have no choice. I'm not going to allow a legal battle or a fight go over while the problem gets worse. I think that would not be the proper thing to do in this area, and we're not going to do it. We're going to make sure it's cleaned up.

Leader of the Opposition: I know we had a few questions on this during Question Period, which, again, had more people call. You may want to make comments again on what your department's doing to try to help the public realize what insurance companies do cover or do not cover in this whole area. Because, again, it's so expensive to the poor homeowner, but also expensive to all the people like you're describing out there. Do you want to make some comments there?

Mr. Brown: In terms of oil tanks, there was a program put in place a number of years ago which basically replaced all the oil tanks on Prince Edward Island. There are some concerns about some of the tanks that were being installed. We're investigating -

Leader of the Opposition: Those tanks were to have a 20-year warranty or whatever on them, were they not?

Mr. Brown: That's a good point. The tag says 20 years.

Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

Mr. Brown: The department's tag may say 20 years, or up to 20 years, or 15 years, or five years. That's the department's expiry date on that tank. It was not necessarily the manufacturer's warranty.

Leader of the Opposition: Wow.

Mr. Brown: Yes, and that's where I'm investigating that, to see what happened there, why we didn't - why the tag didn't say the warranty. But they were using the

best information at the time. The manufacturers were saying: Although my warranty is for five years, or six years, or eight years, it should last 20 years. Well -

Leader of the Opposition: Big difference.

Mr. Brown: Personally, I'm looking at it and saying: Maybe people bought the tank, looked at the tag, and said, this is a 20-year tank. But, no, the tag was: You should get it replaced in the next 20 years. It had nothing to do with the warranty. We're investigating that.

Leader of the Opposition: So do you have people in your legal department, or there are lawyers in government looking at that, just to see how many people that affects?

Mr. Brown: We're working with risk management. The independent insurance bureau is having a meeting here I believe next week. I'm meeting with them next week in order to see what the situation is here and to ensure that - what can we do to improve this situation? It's unacceptable for an oil tank to be leaking and not to be looked after immediately. The faster we get to it the faster we can clean it up and the less cost.

Leader of the Opposition: So are you doing any public education or advertising or whatever for Joe General Public, the consumer, to realize that they may not have that confidence in the product that they thought they had?

Mr. Brown: I don't want to scare, I don't want to send out an advisory right away, until we have all the facts. Once the facts are established that advisory will be sent out to anybody that has a tank and here's the remedial efforts you should do with the tank.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. Brown: It is a major - it is an issue.

Leader of the Opposition: It would be.

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: One more question. I'm just curious in terms of we've gone through probably three pages of your budget so far. Correct?

Mr. Brown: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: In almost all sections you either have zero dollars for professional and contract services or a very meagre amount compared to other government departments. Obviously, you're utilizing all your staff 110% here.

I'm curious. Other departments have in professional and contract services \$50,000 in divisions, \$100,000 etc. Have you noticed that yourself, minister?

Mr. Brown: I guess what we can say about the department here is that this is ongoing work, the environmental protection, the analytical lab is ongoing work, the shellfish program is ongoing work, and therefore permanent staff is hired for that ongoing work. It's not a - we don't have any bumps or cycles that we go through here. It's just a constant environmental protection of (Indistinct) -

Leader of the Opposition: But some of your areas are so big, from our drinking water, the watershed management, the environment, when we talked about climate change. I'm just curious that you seem to utilize all your staff, which is a good thing, and it seems very rare that you go to professional or consulting services, compared to other departments.

Mr. Brown: Yes. All I can say there is the functions they do, the work they do, is year

round, or it's a specific amount of work in a specific amount of time, and they're scheduled and government employees are hired for those jobs instead of contracting it out.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Pesticide Management. "Appropriations provided for the operation of the Pesticide Management Program, including administration and regulation of the *Pesticides Control Act* and regulations." Administration: 5,400. Equipment: 1,000. Materials, Supplies and Services: 7,600. Professional and Contract Services: 60,800. Salaries: 138,800. Travel and Training: 4,000. Total Pesticide Management: 217,600.

Questions?

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

Mr. D. Currie: Thank you.

Minister, I've been getting a number of calls this past spring from residents of my district. The issue is - and it's been an ongoing issue - it's the odour coming from the water treatment plant. It's down around Beasley, Linden Avenue. I know that there's been some infrastructure money given. What is your understanding of the problem? Because I know that there is a lot of upset residents because the odour is pretty strong, depending on the day and which way the wind's blowing, and I'm getting more and more complaints about it. Just your thoughts on that.

Mr. Brown: The department is working with the city on this issue. It's an important issue. It's a main entrance to the city. It's a big plan. I understand Summerside put a particular system in and Charlottetown put a

different system in. We're reviewing the two systems. Additional federal money was set aside and provincial money was set aside to look after this problem.

They're just working on what is - how do they incorporate these new solutions into that plan.

Mr. D. Currie: So the department and the city, obviously, are fully aware of the issue and they're working towards a plan? Because I have driven down. When I do get calls from constituents, I drive down because I don't live in that part of the district. It's quite obvious and it's quite prevalent, the odour, but I'm glad to hear you, as the minister, are - I know that your district is very connected to that area as well so I'm sure that you're making it a huge priority.

Mr. Brown: No, we are. You're after us all the time to make sure that we're looking at it, too. So there is a lot of pressure on both the city and ourselves. But it is a city plant, but we're willing to provide any expertise we can in terms of that.

Mr. D. Currie: I'll make sure that I pass that on that we had the discussion.

Thanks.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: You do have dollars put in for professional and contract services. I'm curious in terms of the data base that your development - a cosmetic pesticide data base. Want to tell us about that?

Mr. Brown: We're working on it. I know last year the commitment was made, lawn care companies would be asked to update any schedules they'd have to do on the computer system. I've asked the department

and I've asked computer people to take a look at this and get this up right now. We're going to be working on our paper system, but it is a priority in our department in order to get this up and running. This contract here is for - we're working with the PEI health co-op in order to help us educate and put out brochures and programs in order to educate the people in terms of the new *Pesticide Control Act*. The more we can educate the better it is. But it's not done, we're working on it, we're hoping to get it up and running.

Leader of the Opposition: The other one, can you update - again, I had asked you about doing an intergovernmental maybe committee, especially if we started with the lawn pesticides - government has a number of golf courses - to look at maybe options for our golf courses and whatever. In the fall you said you'd do that. Who is the lead on that committee and what departments are involved?

Mr. Brown: Don Reeves is in charge of this section here, and Thane Clarke is in that section also. We're hoping to bring in some expertise with the PEI health co-op. We have asked the department of tourism and its golf courses to come back with a pesticide management plan. Nova Scotia has just gone with a pesticide - or they've introduced legislation that is going to ban the use of lawn pesticides. New Brunswick has done it. So all three provinces have done it now. The same issues are coming of all three provinces: How do we move to the next level of golf courses and how do we get to reduce the pesticide use in gold courses?

I don't golf so I didn't know much about golf courses. But what I understand, the buffer zone areas now, there is quite a buffer zone around golf courses in terms of housing. There is no spraying occurring in that area. I'm told that there is no spray occurring in - not runways, what are them? Fairways, yeah. I go golfing three times a

year and I get about 300 score.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier Ghiz: The superintendent (Indistinct) did win an environmental award this year.

Mr. Brown: For Crowbush?

Premier Ghiz: Yeah, at Crowbush.

Mr. Brown: They are working on it, but now it's all three provinces are involved here and we're trying to say: Okay, how do we reduce it? Because all three provinces are under pressure (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: So with Don, does he actually have someone at tourism that works with him on this and who is the person from Health and Wellness and perhaps even someone from agriculture if you're looking at organic substitutes for weed control or pest control?

Mr. Brown: I'll get you those names.

Leader of the Opposition: Would you?

Mr. Brown: Our main objective this year was to get the program up and running.

Leader of the Opposition: Oh sure, because I'm just curious. Because it's an area that I think has great potential. The other part I'd ask, too, is once the committee - is it operational or is it yet to get operational?

Mr. Brown: It's yet to get operational.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. Once they do that they may want to again expand to some of the federal departments or some of the scientific expertise that we have, again, at the vet school when you're looking at especially alternatives.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Environmental Permitting and Legislation. "Appropriations provided to administer and coordinate the environmental assessment and sub-division review process; to administer the Excavation Pit Regulations; the *Automobile Junk Yards Act* and the *Unightly Property Act*; and regulatory management and administration of the Waste Resource Management Regulations and the Litter Control Regulations. Administer watercourse and wetland protection regulations including permitting." Administration: 1,400. Equipment: 2,800. Materials, Supplies and Services: 1,600. Professional and Contract Services: 300. Salaries: 517,900. Travel and Training: 28,000. Total Environmental Permitting and Legislation: 552,000

Questions?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Can you describe the process where there is a house or a building structure that's unsightly, whether it's in a municipality or in a rural area, what the process is to be able to get that property fixed up? Because we have a lot of them.

Mr. Brown: Yeah, it's a question that's been asked quite a few times. We do have an *Unightly Property Act*. George Gaudet, Harry Gaudet's brother, is basically the person I go to whenever I need any advice or any - he's an environmental officer and he's out quite a bit checking these facilities out across Prince Edward Island. It's a very important job. We are working on this situation. It seems to have got -

Leader of the Opposition: Worse.

Mr. Brown: - worse over the years. There is a lot of abandoned properties throughout

Prince Edward Island. With the C&D site and the new tippage fees a lot of people seem to be leaving their properties up instead of taking them down, taking old buildings down, because it just costs too much money to take them to C&D sites. I'm told by some people 8 or \$9,000 to \$25,000.

Leader of the Opposition: How much?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: For a barn?

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: That's like a small -

Mr. Bagnall: That's a large barn.

Leader of the Opposition: A large barn?

Mr. Bagnall: Yeah.

Mr. Brown: And it's an issue -

Mr. Bagnall: (Indistinct) realistic figures.

Mr. Brown: What happens there is - right now, people come issue complaints or call up the department. We will go out and investigate the situation. George will either write it up or talk to the people that are involved here, try to get them to clean up their property. Then we issue them a letter basically saying: Clean up your property.

We put one more letter in between that and the ministerial order, right now. There are a couple more properties I was going to sign the ministerial order last week, but I told them to basically - before we go in with a ministerial order, to send them one more letter saying: If you don't comply with the request of cleaning up your property, the department will be - could, and may issue you a ministerial order, which then will

require the department to go out and fix up your property or not. Tear down your property, get rid of the unsightly thing. Your property then will be - there will be a lien issued against your property, and that lien will be filed with the registry department.

I know, when I was with the city, that was done quite a bit, because we've taken pride in our city, and we've taken to making sure that each and every property is up to standards. I'm hoping that second letter, that the individuals will understand that: Look, we're serious. If the order is issued, we have then the authority to go in and clean it up, and any bill from the clean up - if you don't pay it right away - will be applied. There will be a lien registered against your property. That lien will be thus registered against your property. If that property is owned by you, that lien then is registered against you and it will affect your credit rating.

I'm being serious about this, and I'm making sure that people understand that if we're moving in, and you don't want to pay, a lien's going on your property, and if you don't pay you will forfeit your property.

There are a lot of non-residents out there - and I'm not - they either inherit these properties or they're left these properties and they're left in Toronto or Vancouver somewhere. But they want to keep the land, because someday they may want to come home, and the property, or the buildings on those properties, are falling down and are a fire hazard. We have to make sure that they realize that we will apply the lien against them.

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

Mr. McIsaac: Just a question, I guess, has to do with the watercourse and wetland protection. I hope this is the right section.

But is protecting the shoreline - I know down in my Dad's home property in Earnscliffe the shoreline is just eroding away like crazy. Are we really in favour of banking that? Say we had a lot of cement - I know we have to apply for a permit to put cement down there, but are we doing anything? Is there a plan in place to try and protect any of that? Is it just up to the individual if he can find cement - old cement or something - perhaps when the old barn was taken down and the foundation is still there? Is there a plan in place to try and do anything about that, or is it just left up to the individual to do what he can? You have to apply for a permit to do that?

Mr. Brown: Yeah.

Mr. McIsaac: Right, first. And they come out and do an inspection, or is there much of a hassle to get one of those?

Mr. Brown: There's an inspection done.

Mr. McIsaac: Right.

Mr. Brown: And 99% of the time permits aren't issued.

Mr. McIsaac: Are or aren't?

Mr. Brown: A lot of the time they're not issued.

Mr. McIsaac: They're not issued?

Mr. Brown: Because we've found - and I stand to be corrected here - but we've found if somebody put up a bank, on the coastal area especially - some of the rivers or that I can understand it - but some of the coastal areas - you bank her all up, you're just affecting the person beside you or down from you. Sure, your property is protected, but the person next to you gets all the erosion. Or sometimes, I'm told, the water then comes around and undermines what

work has been done in front. A lot of the time it's a waste of money.

Climate change is occurring, the weather is important. The US government has spent billions of dollars trying to hold water back, and when Mother Nature wants to send us a message, that message is usually sent on our shorelines.

Ms. Sherry: I call the hour.

Chair: The hour has been called.

The hon. minister.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Brown: Thank you.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Gallant: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, that this House adjourn until Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a great weekend.

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

