

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Carolyn Bertram

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MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS .....	460
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS .....	462
BELFAST-MURRAY RIVER (Congratulations to PEI 55+ Ladies Hockey Team) .....	462
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Kristen Cameron) .....	462
MORELL-MERMAID (CFCY Hoedown-Throwdown) .....	463
SOURIS-ELMIRA (North Lake Processing Plant).....	463
ORAL QUESTIONS.....	463
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Atlantic Lottery Corporation).....	463
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (FEMA Minister and Online Gaming Project).....	464
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Gaming File and Atlantic Lottery Corporation).....	464
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Gaming File and Criminal Code of Canada) .....	465
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Gaming File and Government Loan) .....	465
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Legal Opinion on Government Loan re: Gaming File) .....	466
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Security on Government Loan re: Gaming File) .....	467
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Security on Government Loan re: Gaming File and Legal Counsel).....	468
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Government Loan Business Plan re: Gaming File) .....	469
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Gaming File and Government Loan-further).....	470
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Revenue from Native Gaming Initiatives) .....	470
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Government Loan Repayment Backup Plan).....	470
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Queens Wharf Redevelopment Status) .....	471
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Queens Wharf Redevelopment Status re: Gaming Facilities) .....	471
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (GeoSweep re: Online Gaming File) .....	472
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (Cancellation of Tignish Mobile Pap Screening Clinic).....	472
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (Women Over 65 Ineligible for Pap Screening) .....	473
ALBERTON-ROSEVILLE (Confederation Bridge Toll) .....	473
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (GeoSweep re: Online Gaming File-further) .....	474
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Cost of 2014 Celebrations).....	475
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Tourism Marketing of Entire Province) .....	475
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Celebration Zone Value Audit).....	476
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Celebration Zone Cost) .....	476
STRATFORD-KINLOCK (Tourism Marketing of Entire Province-further) .....	477

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS .....	478
PREMIER ( <i>French Language Services Act</i> Report) .....	478
FINANCE, ENERGY AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS (Fall Economic and Fiscal Update) .....	479
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS .....	480
REPORTS BY COMMITTEES .....	481
EDUCATION AND INNOVATION (First Report) .....	481
SUMMERSIDE-ST. ELEANORS .....	481
CHARLOTTETOWN-SHERWOOD .....	482
EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT .....	483
FISHERIES, TRANSPORTATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (First Report) .....	483
EVANGELINE-MISCOUCHE .....	483
SOURIS-ELMIRA .....	484
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT) .....	484
COMMITTEE .....	484
CAPITAL ESTIMATES .....	484
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE .....	490
BILL 22 – Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2015 .....	490
COMMITTEE .....	492
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES .....	492
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE .....	492
BILL 23 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2014 .....	492
RESPONSE TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE .....	493
TOURISM AND CULTURE .....	494
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION .....	494
CHARLOTTETOWN-SHERWOOD .....	498
THANKS TO HIS HONOUR THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR .....	498
SECOND READING AND COMMITTEE .....	499
BILL 27 – Municipal Statutes Amendment Act 2014 .....	499
BILL 25 – An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act .....	504
BILL 24 – An Act to Amend the Teachers’ Superannuation Act .....	507
SPEAKER’S RULING .....	510
ADJOURNED .....	511

The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

We have a great crowd, actually, in the gallery today. I do want to take this opportunity to recognize a couple of people.

Great to see the Larters back again, John Terra, always wonderful to see him. Jamie Fox is here as well. I want to recognize Jamie.

I do want to take this opportunity, because we'll wind up at some point, so I do want to recognize someone who since I've been in this Legislature now for, I'm going to say, close to 12 years and 24 sittings, someone who's been at each sitting, except for, I think, one, has a better attendance record than I've had over the past 12 years, and of course that's Eddie Lund, who never misses a time.

We know that tonight there could be some inclement weather on the way. I want to encourage Islanders to listen to weather reports, listen to travel reports and listen to the RCMP as well if there are advisories about staying off the roads.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to welcome everybody that's here today. There's a good crowd in the gallery and those who are following along, of course, at home, on the Internet or by EastLink.

I just want to mention Jamie Fox is here today, and I see Dennis Halliday is up there too.

I hope everyone enjoys the proceedings this afternoon.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Community Services and Seniors.

**Ms. Docherty:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise and welcome everybody in the gallery.

After reading my minister's statement yesterday in regards to violence against women, I wanted the Legislature and anyone listening or watching to hear about a wonderful idea in a school.

Ellen Read is one of the grade 6 teachers – there are three grade 6 classes – at West Royalty school. They are having a pajama day where the students can come to school this Friday, pay either a loonie or twonie. They can come dressed in their pajamas. What the school is going to do is they're going to take all that money and buy pajamas for both children and women, and they're donating it to Anderson House.

Linda Inman Hyson, who's the teacher who told me about it, her father is Harvey Inman, president of my association, and I think was a little shy about making it aware. But considering the time of year, the fact that these are children from K-6, what a wonderful thing that they're doing for Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

**Mr. Murphy:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise and welcome all those in the public gallery.

We have a group of four from West Prince here today: my mother and father-in-law, Eric and Arlene McKenna, and Eleanor Matthews and Shirley Smallman. I would

like to welcome all of you to the public gallery.

I'd also like to welcome those who are home watching on EastLink in the wonderful District of Alberton-Roseville.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, want to welcome those to the gallery and also reiterate some of the comments from the Member from Alberton-Roseville. There's a couple constituents up there from the riding of O'Leary-Inverness – Shirley Smallman, one of the great constituents in one of the seniors' apartments in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness. Shirley always keeps me up to date on issues pertaining to her building. As well, Harvey Collicutt is there from Springfield West, and Harvey is always a great advocate and watcher of the House proceedings here. It's great to see him down here to see it all live.

I also want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the PEI Potato Blossom Festival is having their annual meeting tonight at the O'Leary Legion. Hopefully there will be a large turnout. I know they had a very successful season and plans are well underway for a great festival for 2015.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

I want to welcome everyone to the gallery, the Larters and John Terra and Eddie, and I see the Taylors are here from Bunbury, my part of Stratford. Eddie, I played hockey with him for years. He is a terrific carpenter. His carpenter skills are still here. I'm not sure on the hockey bit. He was on the other team. I had to shoot that in there.

I also want to wish a happy 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary to my beautiful bride who is teaching out in Vernon River today, and it's just fantastic.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Ms. Crane:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd really like to welcome all the visitors in the gallery and those people watching at home. Jamie Larkin, Jamie Fox, Georga Dawn and her daughter Rosie. Shane Hennessey, my chief of staff, it's his birthday today. I know a lot of people are wondering about the future of his career today. Hopefully we'll soon have that settled.

I guess the final thing that I'd like to say is I really sincerely want to thank all the people that have been contacting me, and you know, 2000 is a great number.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today in the House and to greet everyone that might be happening to be watching us currently on EastLink or watching on the Internet.

Also like to extend greetings to the three Jamies here today; Jamie Larkin, Jamie Fox and, of course, Jamie Locke.

Jamie Locke, of course, is with the Salvation Army. There was a wonderful announcement this morning and it just gives you hope in the community with our Christmas season coming upon us. Carr, Stevenson & MacKay has graciously donated store frontage on Queen Street to the Salvation Army for their annual toy store. I encourage all Islanders to get out to support the Salvation Army through this wonderful initiative. Again, thank you very

much for the generosity of Carr, Stevenson & MacKay.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

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

**Congratulations to PEI 55+ ladies hockey team**

**Mr. McGeoghegan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise in the House today to congratulate and recognize the ladies hockey team who represented PEI at the Canada 55+ games in Strathcona County in Alberta this past August.

PEI ended the tournament with a bronze medal following a tough contest against a Calgary based team that ended in a 4-3 score.

PEI was truly the underdogs going into the tournament only having eight skaters, while other teams had at least 18 players to choose from. This was the first time women's hockey was included in this national competition.

Representing the eastern end of the province on Team PEI were Heather Moore of Murray River, Linda MacEachern of Lower Newtown, Dianne Ferguson of Murray River and Carol White of Murray Harbour. Their coaches were Dawn Moase and Pat Davis.

I want to send congratulations their way on this huge victory for representing Prince Edward Island on the national stage. These local ladies certainly made us proud.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

**Kristen Cameron**

**Ms. Casey:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to congratulate Albert Roche, Holland College's Athletics and Recreation Director, and his team at Holland College for a successful fundraising dinner at the Culinary Institute.

The theme of the evening, Leadership and Sport, had over 200 people come together to hear Kristen Cameron speak about her involvement in sport and the leadership roles she's held during her sporting and coaching careers.

Kristen graduated from Bowdoin College and was at Merceyhurst University in Erie, Pennsylvania, coaching one of the best hockey teams in the USA, a team with many Olympians, including the number one player in the world, Megan Agosta.

Kristen, much to her surprise and at a young age, figured out what she was meant to do in her life – be a coach. After her hockey playing ended she took up cycling. That was what she was doing when she was hit from behind by a drunk driver and is now a quadriplegic.

Kristen told her story of recovery and what her life has been since the accident. Not one to dwell on the past, she told everyone that she has made great progress in the last year when she entered the sporting world. She has skied, glided, surfed in Hawaii, and she just came back from Japan where she represented Canada in her new favourite sport of wheelchair rugby.

Kristen showed us all that night the importance and benefit of being involved in sport.

This impressive young woman is certainly a true role model, a passionate coach, and this is just the beginning for Kristen Cameron and the next stage in her sporting career.

I ask the House to join me in wishing Kristen the very best in her new passion, wheelchair rugby.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

### CFCY Hoedown-Throwdown

**Ms. Crane:** Madam Speaker, Christmastime is coming and, for many Islanders, a little help is needed to make sure all Islanders have a nice Christmas dinner.

It is an honour and a pleasure to be working with my favourite radio station, CFCY, the most famous person of all, *Saturday Night Hoedown* host Georga Dawn, and the Salvation Army to raise money for the much needed Christmas food hampers.

It gives me such pleasure to be announcing for the second year in a row the CFCY Hoedown-Throwdown on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014, from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

This little country mouse is challenging the city mouse, the Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale, to see just who loves country music the most and helping people out at Christmas.

On a serious note, last year, with our combined efforts, we raised approximately \$7,000 and helped the Salvation Army help 1,000 families and 900 children. What could be more important than that?

Thanks to CFCY, Al Baldwin, Georga Dawn, the Salvation Army, Captain Jamie Locke, the Member from Charlottetown-Parkdale and all the wonderful people who called in during the radio show to make donations. I figure the 2,000 or so that called me, multiply that by \$50, we should do well this year.

Please, once again, help us all show the wonderful Christmas spirit and what we should be doing is helping others.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

### North Lake processing plant

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

When we speak of our industries on PEI it's always a privilege to stand to speak. Today I

want to recognize the North Lake fish processing plant and its employees.

This processing plant is very important to the eastern end of PEI. It is a major employer in the area for over 100 employees. This ensures that the surrounding business community thrives and prospers.

Over the past few years, they have been able to successfully double the amount of product processed through access to new markets. The benefits of these increases in processing have been felt by fishermen and businesses throughout the area.

This would not have been possible without Jim Beale and the employees of the North Lake fish processing plant. Their hard work and drive to increase processing and meet the demands has created an efficient and valuable work force.

Having access to new markets benefits our economy and all Islanders. The North Lake fish processing plant plays a role in our fishing industry and it has proven that it is capable of increasing their productivity in a competitive economic environment.

I want to congratulate Jim Beale and the employees of the North Lake fish processing plant on a tremendous year. As we end 2014 and go into 2015, I want to wish them well in the 2015 season.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

#### Questions by Members

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

### Atlantic Lottery Corporation

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question to the Premier. Atlantic Lotto is a big partner in our economy and millions of dollars annually in revenue are injected in this province through them. Hundreds of direct and indirect jobs are created and they

are a vital support to the harness industry here on Prince Edward Island.

Question to the Premier: Would you agree that our partnership with the Atlantic Lottery Corporation is important?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier Ghiz:** Absolutely, and when you look at the Atlantic Lottery Corporation and the work that it does with the four provinces in the Atlantic region, we're very fortunate to have it.

As you know, there are a number of lottery commissions across the country and we're very happy that we're able to cooperate with the three other Atlantic Provinces for the Atlantic Lottery Corporation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Last year Atlantic Lotto presented to the Public Accounts Committee and they said, and I quote: "We do know that most Atlantic Canadians are strongly of the view that it would be better for this province if those games were played through Atlantic Lottery. Our research and national research bears this out."

Question to the Premier: Do you agree with this statement?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

If Atlantic Lottery is able to provide more programs that are already available online or to the general public where they're able to actually bring those dollars in so that we're able to spend the profits on health care and education, I think that is always a good thing.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

### **FEMA minister and online gaming project**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Premier believes that Atlantic Lotto is important to the economy of Prince Edward Island and Atlantic Lotto believes that they have the job for gaming for Atlantic Canada.

Question to the treasurer: Why did you spend three to five years, and perhaps millions of taxpayers' dollars, to develop a secret online gaming project on the side?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

I'm pleased to tell the House today that I was able to get the information that the opposition leader has been talking about, the accounts at McInnes Cooper that we spoke about here over the last number of days. Clearly state what has taken place, and as the opposition member knows, it's not millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. This was a project that was the Mi'kmaq Confederacy and the province going hand-in-hand, along with a number of consultants, to try to find a solution that would complement what Atlantic Lottery provides here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

### **Gaming file and Atlantic Lottery Corporation**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's funny the minister says he has the information when just moments ago, when he was given the opportunity to stand up and talk about it, he didn't.

When confronted about your secret online gaming project you have said many times that the file has now been turned over to the ALC. Question to the treasurer: When did you turn this file over to ALC?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Secretive is certainly not the proper word for this. It's confidential, and confidential because we're trying to create a space in this online sphere that was being chased by a number of provinces as well as a number of United States jurisdictions. Florida, California, New Jersey were all looking to get into this and we needed to be first mover into this space. That's why the confidentiality was needed. Very important information that we're trying to establish here in Prince Edward Island.

Unlike some other governments we don't sit on our hands here. We try to find better ways to make Prince Edward Island a better place to live.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So after, what, three or four days of questioning the word is now confidential. It's confidential. I'm wondering if the gala event of the conference that he was at was confidential. It appears it was confidential, yeah.

### **Gaming file and Criminal Code of Canada**

You turned the file over to the ALC after three to five years of secret development with taxpayers' money.

Question to the treasurer. Did you turn the file over before or after you realized that your grand scheme wasn't legal under the Criminal Code of Canada.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

The reason why the confidentiality here over the past number of days is that I hadn't been able to retrieve the information. I hadn't been able to tell each of the proponents of the committee that we were talking about it. Today I've been able to do that with each of the members, I have the information that is there, and I have to tell the House, although I thought this was the case, we talked about a 2012 trip to London, England. I did not go in 2012, I went in January of 2011.

Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct).

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

### **Gaming file and government loan**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The finance minister's secret gaming scheme was financed through a loan from government.

Question to the innovation minister: When was that loan given to this third party?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As the Leader of the Opposition knows, details on loans issued through Finance PEI are confidential for all of our clients, and we need to respect client privileges, so I won't be going into any details on any loans in that portfolio.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think Islanders deserve to know. I think Islanders deserve to know where this government's wasting their money and blowing their money. If this minister doesn't

think it's important, let's go back to the Premier.

Premier, when was this loan given to this third party?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Off the top of my head, I'm going to say sometime after 2007. I'm not exactly sure what the date would be.

But as we know, the First Nations in our country have specific rights that are different than some of the provinces. Obviously, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition has already indicated, that under the Criminal Code the province would have difficulty with online gaming, and the Mi'kmaq was looking for other streams of revenue, and that's why there was a collaboration between the province and the Mi'kmaq to see if there was an avenue where we could go down so that this could be advantageous for our First Nations and also for our province.

I'm guessing the loan, I'm going to say sometime after 2007.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This finance minister said that the loan was kept a secret because any loan under \$1 million doesn't have to get Cabinet approval, so this means that the innovation minister approved it.

Question to the innovation minister: Did you approve a loan of hundreds of thousands of dollars to develop this secret online gaming scheme?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Again, Madam Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, details of loans issued through Finance PEI are confidential and we need to respect the

client privilege in that, so I won't be going into any details on that loan portfolio.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't think that there'd be any secrets given up if you answered the question that I asked which was: Did you approve the loan? So, did you approve the loan?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Again, Madam Speaker, as the opposition knows, the details of the loans issued through Finance PEI are confidential and, as such, I won't be releasing any information that would have anything to do with that client privilege.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm wondering if the transportation minister could turn the page over and see if he's got other answers on the next page there because all I'm asking him is: Did he approve the loan? I didn't ask him to give up any information about anybody who was in a meeting, anybody who talked about a loan, anybody who applied for a loan.

I'm asking him: Did he actually approve the loan? He doesn't want to talk about it. He doesn't think Islanders deserve to know where their money's being spent. I feel bad for Islanders today.

**Legal opinion on government loan re: gaming file**

Question again to the same minister: Did you get legal opinion on the legality of your government's gaming scheme before you gave that money away?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Madam Speaker, the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island is an important organization to Prince Edward Island, to First Nations and to Canada.

As the opposition, again, knows, details on these loans issued through Finance PEI are confidential and I will not be releasing or breaking the privilege of any clients through that Finance PEI portfolio.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is a minister who doesn't want to tell Islanders whether or not he approved the loan. This is a minister who doesn't want to tell Islanders whether or not he sought out a legal opinion whether or not the government scheme was legal, which it turned out it wasn't. So he obviously didn't get a legal opinion, and I'll answer the questions for him.

He approved the loan and he didn't get a legal opinion because a legal opinion would have told him it wasn't legal because they found that out after the fact.

#### **Security on government loan re: gaming file**

Question again to the minister: What security was put in place to protect the taxpayers on your financing of this government's secret online gaming scheme loan?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

This loan – and it's been said many times in the hallways over the past number of days – are all based on being repaid with revenues from gaming initiatives here on Prince Edward Island, and that's how it will be repaid. No questions asked. That's how it's going to be repaid. There won't be a taxpayer dollar lost here.

I have to stand here and defend what this project was all about. As we've said many times here over the past four Question Periods, we will not back down from this initiative and why it was proper for Prince Edward Island at the time.

There are millions of dollars in just tiny Prince Edward Island that go offshore every year to unregulated sites online. We cannot stop it. Everyone across the globe has tried to do this differently. We were trying to find a way where we could police, regulate and tax this activity and keep those tax dollars here on Prince Edward Island for health and education, and at the same time, protect our constituency from unregulated games.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I asked the innovation minister a number of questions here today, he read off a sheet of paper the same answer five times. I asked him a question about the security on this loan. The finance minister answered it and didn't answer the question.

I'm going to go the Premier again because the Premier is in charge of this whole event.

Premier, can you tell Islanders that there was at least security in place on this loan? Can you tell them what that security was?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Again, the loan would have went out after 2007. I'm going to guess 2008-2009. Realistically, what the hon. member is talking about is correct, that we were in a situation where there was Criminal Code issues with regards to that. We thought that if we could work with the Confederacy by looking for them to get new revenues from gaming – which they were looking for – that perhaps there was a legal component where we could do this. We know in some other provinces there are things like this taking place, and of course, that is why we loaned

the money to the Mi'kmaq Confederacy so that they would be able to explore the options and the legal entities around being able to establish that here on Prince Edward Island.

That's essentially what happened. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. I have a great faith in the Mi'kmaq Confederacy, and we still are working on a number of different projects with them, and we believe that anything we can do to help out the Mi'kmaq Confederacy is a good thing for Islanders.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Security on government loan re: gaming file and legal counsel**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Back to the innovation minister, then. Was the security on this loan agreement reviewed by the department's legal counsel before you cut the cheque?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, as I've stated I think about four or five times already, it's a confidential deal agreement between Finance PEI and the Mi'kmaq Confederacy.

What I can say is that loan is not in default.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What I'm trying to find out is whether or not you have a security on the loan. The Premier's willing to answer questions on it. You're not. He's your boss. Maybe you could take that as a cue that you can also answer questions.

Isn't it true that your department's legal counsel is one of the Premier's closest personal and political confidants?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Madam Speaker, thank you.

Again, I'm not sure where the Leader of the Opposition is going with that, but as I've stated probably five times so far, any loans that came out of Finance PEI are confidential in nature. As such I respect the privilege of that with our clients, and I'm not at liberty to discuss those loans or what comes out of that portfolio in terms of loans out of Finance PEI.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Perhaps I'm not speaking clear and perhaps the member's not listening. What I asked him was who the legal counsel was, and I asked him: Is it true that the legal counsel – so I'll ask it again, and I'll slow right down this time – is it true that the legal counsel that you would use in your department is one of the Premier's closest personal confidants and political confidants?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Maybe I'll slow down my answer for the sixth time. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, loans that go through Finance PEI are confidential.

I have no idea who the Premier's personal confidants are. He doesn't share that with me.

**Leader of the Opposition:** There you go. (Indistinct) –

**Mr. Roach:** And we deal with a lot of lawyers.

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Roach:** We deal with many lawyers, and I have dealt with many lawyers. With respect to the loans that come out of Finance PEI, those are confidential, and I don't have the privilege of releasing that information. I

do not want to break that relationship that we have with all of our clients in Prince Edward Island. They need to know that if they come to this government, that if they come to Innovation PEI, and those loans are confidential, that will remain that way, not just because the Leader of the Opposition wants that question answered here in the House, Madam Speaker.

We need to have that credibility.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) taxpayers (Indistinct)!

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Roach:** We need to have that credibility on economic development here in the Province of Prince Edward Island with all of our businesses.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So suddenly confidentiality's very important to this minister, which is funny to hear him slamming other deals in this House previously, so maybe he's just learning about confidentiality. Maybe he just learned it in this role. I don't know.

**Government loan business plan re: gaming file**

Question again to the minister: Will you table a copy of your business plan and your due diligence that you based your loan approval on?

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

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

For the seventh time, as the Leader of the Opposition knows loans that are made through Finance PEI are confidential in nature and as such I will not break that privilege with any of our clients.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm going to ask a different question. I'll get the same answer, but I'm quite enjoying the fact that you can't move off your script.

Question now again to the innovation minister: Did your business plan contain any contingencies for repayment in the event that the government's secret online gaming platform didn't work?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm standing to answer this question because this was part of the qualities of what we were doing with the Mi'kmaq Confederacy. I find it quite hard to believe that we're standing in the House, the opposition leader actually questioning the veracity of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island.

With the Mi'kmaq Confederacy –

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct) stories you told.

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Leader of the Opposition:** Pretty wild.

**Speaker:** Order, member!

**Leader of the Opposition:** Pinocchio would blush.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Of the relationship that we enjoy with the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island. The loan was presented in a fashion that the loan would be repaid with revenues coming from the gaming initiative. That indeed will be the way that's it's repaid.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Gaming file and government loan (further)**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Back to the innovation minister here, again. By the finance minister's own admission, this project was underway for close to five years.

Question: Was there only one time that your department supplied funds through a loan for this secret online gaming development?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs. –

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

As the people that are a part of this have all been reached and I can now speak freely here in the House to tell what took place –

**Mr. LaVie:** Leadership.

**Mr. Sheridan:** – we know that –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Sheridan:** – the Mi'kmaq Confederacy sent us a letter back in 2009 to ask if we would partake in this particular entry into the market. They had been doing a lot of the research themselves and they asked if the province would go along with them to do some further research to see if we could actually bring this to fruition.

At that point, in about February of 2010, we brought in a few other proponents, a number of specialties to help us with this research. At that point the Mi'kmaq Confederacy established a loan through innovation and the proceeds were run through McInnes Cooper so that we could continue on with the research that was needed to try to bring this to a reality on Prince Edward Island.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Revenue from Native gaming initiatives**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question again to the innovation minister. On Friday the finance minister said that the 2012 loan would be repaid to taxpayers through the proceeds of Native gaming initiatives – that's what he said – and you approved this loan, so question to the innovation minister.

What revenue from Native gaming initiatives will repay this loan?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Never would I have said that it was Native returns on revenues on gaming. These are from gaming revenues from the province that will repay this loan. This was work that was done hand-in-hand with the Mi'kmaq Confederacy and we worked very diligently to try to bring this solution home.

In 2012 we found that we had reached a dead end and that all provinces were now attempting to bring it in through their lottery corporations, and that's where it stands today. February 2012 we made the corporate decision to turn it over to Atlantic Lottery and that's where it is.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Government loan repayment backup plan**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question to the innovation minister, because surely he must know what the finance minister is talking about – he approved the loan and really, it falls on his shoulders to answer some of these questions.

Question to the innovation minister: What was the backup plan that you approved to repay this loan to taxpayers?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

The agreement is that the money that flows through Atlantic Lottery captures all of revenue from gaming from Prince Edward Island and the other three Atlantic Provinces, just as the Premier was asked in the first question of Question Period. This is how it all flows. At that point the Island government of the day can make those decisions on how that money is spent into general revenue, of course.

So with our new gaming initiative we would take those funds founded from that game and pay back the loan. It would be dwarfed in size with what would be returned from taking advantage of the online gaming that exists today. If we can regulate it, police it and tax it that is the best case for all Islanders.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

That failed. That plan failed. It's a pipe dream and it's a pipe dream that the finance minister has had many of. It's a social pass at best for him.

### **Queens Wharf redevelopment status**

I want to move to the transportation minister. What's the status of the redevelopment of the Queens Wharf property on the Charlottetown waterfront across the street from the convention centre?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** Madam Speaker, we had a lot of interest in that when we went out with our RFP.

There is a developer that's looking at that to try and do some due diligence and when he does he's going to report back and we'll have more updates at that time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

### **Queens Wharf redevelopment status re: gaming facilities**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question again to the transportation minister: Have you received any proposals about redeveloping the waterfront property to accommodate expanded gaming facilities?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** No, I haven't.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question again to the transportation minister: Have you had any conversations around the Cabinet table or elsewhere about redeveloping the waterfront property to accommodate expanding gaming facilities?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, Cabinet has a code that we do not break Cabinet secrecy, but I haven't, outside, I haven't spoken to that at all, no.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Islanders have this code where they want to know where the money's being spent. I know it's a foreign concept to you guys over there, but to us we understand it quite well.

I'm going to move to the tourism minister: Have you received any proposals on the waterfront property to accommodate expanding gaming facilities?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, no, we have not.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Back to the tourism minister again: Do you think that adding gaming facilities on the Charlottetown waterfront will take away the support for the Red Shores (Indistinct) harness racing industry?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** I'm not really aware of what the hon. member is referring to, Madam Speaker.

We have the Red Shores racino and Red Shores in Summerside. Those are working quite well, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

#### **GeoSweep re: online gaming file**

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

At the Public Accounts hearing the Atlantic Lottery Corporation mentioned that: Atlantic Canadians very much want to see this company providing that gaming option for them. They want us to do that because they trust us. They know that responsible gaming is part of our mandate. Actually, central to our mandate, and they also know they'll get paid if they win.

Question to the finance minister: Did you bet millions of taxpayers' dollars on the GeoSweep project before or after you turned over your secret online gaming scheme to Atlantic Lottery for them to sort out on your behalf?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

With all the speculation that's going on on the floor of the House today, I'm not quite sure which question to answer for the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. Sheridan:** Madam Speaker, with regard to the GeoSweep account, this was a game, just like others, like the 6/49, like Lotto Max, that Atlantic Lottery works at each and every year.

They bring forward 10 games. They're successful on a great number of these. We hear all about the great successes, but we don't hear about the ones that don't quite make it. This one is very different because two provinces invested in this instead of four and that's why.

But when you compare it to the other failures that have already taken place, and GeoSweep has not to this point, we would be palling in comparison. We hope, through this new iteration, that we will see some success with it in the UK.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

#### **Cancellation of Tignish mobile pap screening clinic**

**Mr. Perry:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Recently it was announced that the mobile pap screening clinic that was held at the Tignish Health Centre will no longer be available and my community is concerned. There were three or four clinics that were held throughout the year and there was actually a waiting list for women to get in on it. Many of these women felt more comfortable going to that clinic than they would to their family physician, if their family physician would actually accept them into the program.

My question is to the minister of health: Why was this decision made, and how will Health PEI address these concerns?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

I want to acknowledge the work by D.I. Stewart, who is a physician in Cornwall,

Prince Edward Island, who led the pap screening program for across the province. As part of his program he did have a day, day and a half, a week, mobile clinic where his staff went out to provide screenings, and we're extremely committed to improving access and having more women screened for cervical cancer.

We basically have been working with D.I. Stewart. We've trained 10 nurses. We will be deploying the 10 nurses in locations all across Prince Edward Island which will allow us to expand our ability to reach more Island women on a consistent basis and schedule more regular pap clinics.

**Speaker:** A supplementary question, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

**Mr. Perry:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

That's great news to hear that we're going to have nurses trained specifically to do this screening.

Will the minister be able to commit to an RN at the health centre in Tignish to do the screening?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

Currently, as I indicated, we have – the support and resources that were paid to Dr. D.I. Stewart to run the provincial clinic has been distributed to offset training to provide access and skills to 10 nurses across the province. I will get back to the Member from Tignish-Palmer Road in respect to the staffing, but as I indicated, there will be 10 nurses now.

Currently the mobile clinic is led by an administrator and a nurse – do go out in the communities, a day, day and a half, a week, but we're looking at expanding the number of nurses that are already out in primary health care networks across the province so we can get better access and more consistent scheduled screening access for Island women in the prevention of cervical cancer here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

**Speaker:** A second supplementary, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road.

### **Women over 65 ineligible for pap screening**

**Mr. Perry:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Minister, I've been told that women over the age of 65 are not eligible for this screening. Is that correct?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

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

I can also bring back – during screening processes there is heightened awareness for women in this (Indistinct) between a certain window in age. I don't have those specific age numbers right now but I can certainly bring that back and I'll have that here as soon as possible.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

### **Confederation Bridge toll**

**Mr. Murphy:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Minister, the federal Conservative Government is replacing the Champlain Bridge in Quebec. The new bridge could cost as much as \$5 billion. The Confederation Bridge that is constitutionally in place with Terms of PEI joining Confederation was built at a cost of just over \$1 billion. There is much discussion on whether or not the tolls will be charged on the new bridge in Quebec. The toll, if charged, would be in the 2 to \$3 range.

Islanders currently pay an average of \$45 to cross the Confederation Bridge, a bridge that cost almost \$4 billion less than the Champlain Bridge to build. This just plainly and simply is not fair to Islanders. Will the minister look into this matter and ensure that Islanders are treated fairly?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** Madam Speaker, I do recall Senator Downe bringing that out into the media here not that long ago.

I can assure this House that all Islanders expect the same as any other Canadians on a piece of infrastructure such as the bridge tolls that any other Canadians would get. I would expect the same for Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** A supplementary question, the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

**Mr. Murphy:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yes, Senator Percy Downe brought this concern forward. He suggested that if there are no tolls on the Champlain Bridge, then there shouldn't be any tolls on the Confederation Bridge. I agree. But I also agree think that if tolls on the \$5 billion Champlain Bridge are 2 to \$3, then the toll on the \$1 billion Confederation Bridge should be at least the same.

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** Do you have a question, member?

**Mr. Murphy:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Minister, will you meet with our federal Cabinet minister, Minister Shea, to discuss making the tolls that Islanders must pay comparable to tolls being proposed in Quebec?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I will gladly meet with Minister Shea and discuss the options around that, and I'll also bring it up with federal Minister Raitt the next time I get the opportunity.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Right before, when I was asking questions there, I heard a number of things from the finance minister. He talked about his other failures, which it's good to hear him finally talk about in this House.

I know earlier on in Question Period we heard about not being able to break Cabinet confidentiality. The minister couldn't talk about a loan which he then turned around and talked about and said it wasn't in default, so I'm not sure which it is. He can talk about it or he can't talk about it.

I'm going to go to the Premier and see if he can straighten this all out for us.

### **GeoSweep re: online gaming file (further)**

Atlantic Lottery Corporation is in place to protect our interest when it comes to gambling in Atlantic Canada and they are well known and they've been known for a number of years.

The question that I asked the finance minister I'll now ask to you because he chose not to answer it or couldn't answer it. The millions of dollars that your finance minister gambled on GeoSweep: Do you know if he did that before or after he botched this secret online gaming file and had to shuffle it off to Atlantic Lottery to fix for him?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Here's what I do know. All games at Atlantic Lotto obviously need investments from the provinces so that we're able to reap the benefits from them. Whether or not you go back to 6/49, you go back to Super 7 which is now LOTTO MAX, and realistically, a lot of this comes from legislation that was passed in the late 1970s, actually during the nine-month spurt of Joe Clark as prime minister. Before that a lot of the gambling and lottery revenues in the country were devoted towards sports in our country. Then legislation was then enacted, I believe – I could be wrong on this, I'm going off memory here – to allow provinces to then have jurisdiction over this area, and it's allowed us.

I know that over the last 35 years there have probably been a lot of different games that have been invested in by the province, which the minister of finance has indicated. Just imagine if we didn't invest in 6/49, so then we wouldn't be getting those revenues. Or we didn't invest in LOTTO MAX or, I'm not sure – Pro-Line, I think is another game that is regulated by there. Obviously, there's going to be some winners and there's going to be some losers.

But as a province, we want to make sure that we're there to be able to regulate these things because there's no point allowing these activities to take place. If, in fact, it's going to stay in a black market, Madam Speaker, we want to see it be in a situation where we're able to invest it in health care and education and social programs in our province.

Thank you very much.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

### **Cost of 2014 celebrations**

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Question to the tourism minister: Minister, your big 2014 party is close to wrapping up and many Islanders, including myself, would like to know how much this farewell tour has cost Islanders.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, our 2014 celebrations were a tremendous success.

We brought many tourists to Prince Edward Island, visitors. They had a chance to go all across Prince Edward Island and participate in many festivals, fairs and events and some of the events that 2014 put on.

I can tell the hon. member we invested \$17.4 million, I believe, over four years into the 2014 celebrations.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I know when I turned 40 I didn't have a party this size, and it certainly didn't cost Island taxpayers. The minister did not include PEI 2014 in the budget book last spring so the House does not actually have any details on spending. It was reported as \$30 million, but we can certainly expect that number to be significantly higher.

Again, to the minister of tourism. Your colleague here in the House is finally providing a fiscal update today or it is reported that he will do so. Will you, too, finally cooperate and release all financials from your department and Crowns relating to the costs of 2014?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is no Father of Confederation either.

So when we're talking about 2014 celebrations, we're talking about one of the most significant events that happened in this country's history, and it happened right here in this building and in Charlottetown.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Henderson:** It's obviously an event that's very worthy of celebration. Our government committed \$17.4 million to this over a four-year event. Obviously, 2014 hasn't concluded yet, and we'll be acknowledging all our expenditures when 2014 is concluded. I hope to see the hon. member in Summerside at the wrap-up celebrations for the 2014 year.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

### **Tourism marketing of entire province**

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Budget documents show this minister only budgeted \$3.9 million for marketing the entire province through Tourism PEI this

year. This represents a 10% decrease from 2013-2014 for provincial tourism marketing.

Again, to the minister of tourism: Why was marketing our province from East Point to North Cape and all points in between not a budget priority for you?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Once again, Madam Speaker, the hon. member has these facts wrong.

We did an integrated marketing strategy with 2014 funding and with the provincial Department of Tourism and Culture to promote Prince Edward Island as a premier destination and also to celebrate 2014. It logically would make sense that we wouldn't have two organizations out there trying to market PEI. We did an integrated marketing strategy, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

#### **Celebration Zone value audit**

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

This government during the summer ran a fenced-in holding area for a prominent government restaurateur on the waterfront for 70 days, the famed Celebration Zone.

Minister, will there be a value audit completed for the Celebration Zone?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, the Celebration Zone, once again, was another successful component of 2014 celebrations.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Henderson:** We had the opportunity to promote – many provinces participated in that Celebration Zone and were able to promote their province as part of Confederation and the meeting that was held. We had concerts that had performers from all over the country. Islanders, visitors alike, participated in that.

Yes, obviously, when we complete the 2014 celebrations we'll be doing a review of all expenditures and trying to determine what the return on investment was, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

#### **Celebration Zone cost**

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Our caucus will certainly be waiting to see that value audit should it ever actually take place.

This area was set up to try and lure tourists in and away from private operators and certainly cost taxpayers a pile of money. It was originally reported to be budgeted to cost approximately \$5 million.

Minister, what was the total cost to operate this area from set-up to management to tear down and repairing the damage done to the site?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, the Celebration Zone was an opportunity to promote all the other provinces in the country as well as Prince Edward Island and what makes Prince Edward Island important.

Some of our food, some of our breweries, wine, all of those products were at display. The Celebration Zone attracted visitors to Prince Edward Island, and those visitors also went all across Prince Edward Island to many other venues and events to participate in what makes Prince Edward Island so special, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

With the track record of this government we can only be assured that the \$5 million that was reported is just a drop in the bucket. But let's use that number, let's use the government's \$5 million figure for the

Celebration Zone. If you break that down, \$5 million for a 70-day party in the Celebration Zone, that equates to \$71,000 a day – \$71,000 a day – of taxpayers' money.

Minister, since it cost \$71,000 per day, do you feel that that money was well spent?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Once again, Madam Speaker, the hon. member has it all wrong in regards to the Celebration Zone.

Many provinces contributed to it, providing performers to perform at that particular case. The federal government was involved. Also the city of Charlottetown. There were numerous participants in the Celebration Zone as well as all of the events that occurred across Prince Edward Island, celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference. Obviously many people have participated, and all Islanders and tourism operators benefitted from this investment.

**Speaker:** The hon. Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Let's take that \$5 million and break it down just a little bit further. If you take \$5 million divided by the hours that the Celebration Zone actually operated, we're now talking about \$7,400 per hour it cost taxpayers – \$74,000 it cost taxpayers for the Celebration Zone per hour.

Minister, at \$74,000 per hour do you feel –

**Ms. Sherry:** (Indistinct) a day.

**Mr. Aylward:** Do you feel –

**Ms. Sherry:** (Indistinct) per day.

**Mr. Aylward:** Do you feel – \$71,000 is per day, \$7,400 is per hour.

**Leader of the Opposition:** She's thinking that's a lot of blizzards.

**Speaker:** Question, hon. member?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah, it would be a lot of blizzards.

**Speaker:** Hon. member, question.

**Mr. Aylward:** Again to the minister, do you feel that \$7,400 per hour was money well spent?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Premier Ghiz:** Yes.

**Mr. Henderson:** Madam Speaker, when we're investing in the tourism industry in Prince Edward Island and promoting the culture and heritage of this province, yes, it is a great investment, regardless of who the payers are, whether it's other provinces, the federal government, city of Charlottetown or the provincial government.

**Speaker:** Final question, the hon. Opposition House Leader.

#### **Tourism marketing of entire province (further)**

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Seventy-four hundred dollars an hour to operate a party zone while this province, because of this government's fiscal mismanagement is over \$3 billion in debt – again, \$3 billion in debt, and that is what they're going to be able to hang their hats on at the end of their term.

Again, minister, will you agree that \$5 million would have been much better spent marketing our province as a whole from tip to tip?

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Obviously, Madam Speaker, we had invested in our tourism industry and obviously the hon. member opposite does not believe in the tourism industry.

He does not believe that this industry can generate money that provides the services that all Islanders expect.

But if the hon. member had ever had the opportunity to get out across Prince Edward Island –

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr. Henderson:** – and attend some of these festivals and events like Rock the Boat, the Georgetown Playhouse, the PEI Shellfish Festival –

**Leader of the Opposition:** We'll never see the books before the election.

**Mr. Henderson:** – the Knutsford Women's Institute, the 1864 tea –

**Leader of the Opposition:** (Indistinct) bet they're cooked.

**Mr. Henderson:** – all those events, there were lots of people around them, all of those festivities made anybody that attended feel special. It was a great thing to promote our culture and heritage on Prince Edward Island, and I for one believe it was a great investment for the taxpayer of Prince Edward Island.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** End of Question Period.

#### Statements by Ministers

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

#### **French Language Services Act report**

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

*Premièrement, je voulais – I'd like to recognize some guests that we have in the gallery today. We have Guy LaBonté, président de la Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin, Aubrey Cormier, directeur générale de la société St. Thomas d'Aquin, des employés du Secrétariat aux affaires acadiennes et francophones et des membres du Comité consultatif de la communauté acadienne et francophone.*

First of all, I wanted to – I'd like to recognize some guests that we have in the gallery today. We have Guy LaBonté, Chair

of the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin, and Aubrey Cormier, Executive Director of the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin, employees of the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat and members of the Acadian and Francophone Community Advisory Committee.

*Madame la présidente, c'est en décembre 2013 que mon gouvernement a promulgué en entier la nouvelle loi sur les services en français. Il s'agit d'une réalisation rendue possible grâce à l'engagement de la communauté acadienne et francophone ainsi que du gouvernement.*

Madam Speaker, it was in December 2013 that my government proclaimed the new *French Language Services Act* in its entirety. This accomplishment was made possible because of the engagement of the Acadian and Francophone community and of our government.

*Aujourd'hui, Madame la Présidente, il me fait plaisir de déposer le premier rapport annuel conformément à la nouvelle Loi. Ce rapport présente l'état d'avancement de la mise en oeuvre de la loi pour la période 2013-2014.*

Today it is my pleasure, Madam Speaker, to table the first annual report in accordance with the act. This report outlines the progress in the implementation of the act for the 2013-2014 period. The act allows for aligning the priority needs of the Acadian and Francophone community with government's capacity to deliver services in response to those needs.

This is what makes the act unique to Prince Edward Island. Much progress has been achieved in the last seven years and the act will continue to serve both the Acadian and Francophone community and government for years to come. I am personally very proud of the headway that has been made in the area of French language services.

I would like to take this time to recognize an individual who was instrumental in shaping the direction we took with this legislation.

Many, if not all, know former lieutenant governor and Cabinet minister Léonce Bernard. Léonce came to me in 2007 and impressed upon me the importance of

working with our Acadian and Francophone community, of finding ways to improve programs and services offered in French, and of having a workable *French Language Services Act*. He was a proud Islander and a proud Acadian who always had the well-being of all citizens at heart.

*J'aimerais aussi remercier la Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, les organismes communautaires et tous les individus qui ont participé aux consultations au cours des dernières années. Je désire également souligner l'engagement et le dévouement des employés du Secrétariat aux affaires acadiennes et francophones sans qui la nouvelle loi n'aurait pas pu voir le jour.*

I want to thank the Société Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin, the community organizations and individuals who took part in the many consultations held over the years. I also want to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the staff of the Acadian and Francophone Affairs Secretariat without whom this new act would not have come to fruition.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

*Merci, Madame la Présidente.*

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

### Fall Economic and Fiscal Update

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

The Province of Prince Edward Island is on solid fiscal footing and our economy remains resilient. In fact, in the years since 2007 Prince Edward Island is the only province in Canada that did not experience negative economic growth. What's more, many of our primary industries have had banner years.

The evidence of this can be found in both the 2014/ 2015 Fiscal Update and the 2014 Fall Economic Update which I am tabling today.

The 2014 Fall Economic Update highlights some encouraging trends: provincial GDP

advanced 2% in 2013; we were the only Atlantic Canadian Province to see an increase in our population; international exports increased by 22% through September, led by gains in bioscience, machinery, and transportation equipment manufacturing; room nights sold increased 4.1% through September, while the room occupancy rate increased 1.5%, and; the blueberry harvest increased by 40.5% from last year to 22.7 million pounds, which is an all-time high.

It is encouraging to see improvements across such diverse sectors.

This province remains committed to balancing our budget because Islanders have told us it is a high priority for them.

The second quarter forecast indicates an increase of \$5 million from the budgeted deficit of \$39.7 million, and efforts will continue to mitigate the increase by the end of the year.

As these documents demonstrate, the Island economy is on the right path, and our multi-year fiscal plan has us on track to return to balance by 2016.

In recent months, all three of the bond raters have again confirmed our credit ratings.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** Responding to the minister's statement, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Here's the minister who is absolutely out of touch with his own department, his own books and his own job as finance minister.

A \$3 billion debt is what is being passed on by this minister to our future and to our children on Prince Edward Island, and it's not something that any member of this Legislative Assembly nor any Islander should be proud of. I know that people outside of these four walls certainly aren't proud to hear our government has a \$3

billion debt and such a very small population.

For so very long we've heard this minister push off when he would balance the budget, and now he is saying it's going to be 2016. The funny thing is he was out in the hallway here last week touting that he could see reason for there to be an early election. Of course he does, because he doesn't want to bring down a budget because he knows full well that the truth has to come out in his budget.

It's a shame what he has done to the finances in this province. It's a shame the financial state of this province under this government, and it's a shame that this government thinks that they should be proud of the debt that they're saddling our children and our future with. It's simply not something that's to be proud of.

I've never heard a single peep out of this government of how they plan to pay it back, because you know what? They don't plan to spend any money paying off the debt that they racked up. They want to kick the can down the road. They want somebody else to deal with it at some other time in the future. And the future is here.

This government should be talking today about how they plan on paying back the billion dollars they racked up themselves here in a matter of seven and a half year. Well, it's a billion-plus now because the minister still isn't living under a fiscal reality of a balanced budget.

For once I'd like to hear somebody stand up in this House and say the finances of this province and give a real update, which is what I'm trying to do today.

The finances are in terrible shape. The minister's a terrible minister. He's done a terrible job. He's handing over to our children a massive amount of debt, and he has no plan at all for action, no plan at all for how this would be paid back, not even talking about how this could be paid back and what plan they would put in place to help not saddle our children and our future.

It's shameful. It's another shameful day and it's another shameful day for a shameful minister.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

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

Madam Speaker, by Command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table la *Loi sur les services en français* Rapport Annuel, the Annual Report on the *French Language Services Act* for the period ending 31 March 2014, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and Deputy Premier, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

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

Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the answers to questions 4 and 5 put forward by the Member from Morell-Mermaid, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Ms. Crane:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table questions for the Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the second quarter 2014-2015 fiscal update, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and Deputy Premier, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Another one, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Prince Edward Island 2014 Fall Economic Update, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Culture, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

#### Reports by Committees

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

**Mr. Greenan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Education and Innovation, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. member.

**Mr. Greenan:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood, that the report of the Committee be now adopted.

Your committee is reporting on its activities since last reporting to the Legislative Assembly on April 22, 2014.

As a result of a planning meeting, your committee agreed to look into two important topics regarding education. Your committee looked into the state of education in the province. Your committee heard 11 presentations from 18 individuals on the education system in the province. And two, your committee also continued its investigation into the consideration of programs for people with autism spectrum disorder. Your committee met with the Stars of Life Foundation as well as parents of children with autism.

Additionally, your committee heard from UPEI Student Union on topics of their policy priorities for UPEI students.

As a result of seven meetings held over the course of five months, your committee has carefully considered all of the information provided from presenters and is making 13 recommendations.

Regarding its consideration into the state of education in the province:

1: Your committee recommends the Department of Education undertake an education campaign for parents of students entering high school regarding academic and general streams of education;

2: Your committee recommends that the Department of Education considers researching the benefits of a non-semesterized versus semesterized school year;

3: Your committee recommends that the Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat consider creating a mentorship program for Aboriginal students pursuing education at a post-secondary institution in the province;

4: Your committee recommends that the School Boards in the province hire teachers with specialization in mathematics and sciences for these specific courses, for the intermediate and high school levels;

5: Your committee recommends that the Department of Education and Early

Childhood Development implement a strong communication strategy for any potential future changes to the education system in the province;

6: Your committee recommends that the Department of Education and Early Childhood immediately appoint an Educational Accountability Framework Committee made up of all stakeholders with regards to education on Prince Edward Island;

7: Your committee recommends that the government of Prince Edward Island officially designate learning disabilities (as defined by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada) as a disability on Prince Edward Island;

8: Your committee recommends that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development open a dialogue with the University of Prince Edward Island Faculty of Education, regarding its training of teachers in the area of special needs training.

Regarding its consideration of programs for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder:

9: Your committee recommends that the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning undertake a campaign for prospective employers regarding the benefits of hiring individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder;

10: Your committee recommends that the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning consider looking into a funding partnership with Specialisterne, a Danish IT company;

11: Your committee recommends that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development immediately change the requirements of the School Age Autism Funding program to allow for more flexibility;

12: Your committee recommends that when there is a surplus in the Department of Community Services and Seniors' budget, a review process be put in place for the allocation of that money to be re-distributed to social programs, including Stars of Life and Community Inclusions, for examples.

Regarding other issues that fall under your committee's mandate:

13: Your committee recommends that government review the regulations for the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to look at the benefits of having the province's post-secondary institutions included under this Act.

Your committee wishes to thank the individuals and groups that presented and submitted briefs to the committee. Your committee recognizes that there are many Islanders who work tirelessly on the issues facing the education system today, and commend them for their hard work.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The seconder of this motion is going to speak.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to echo the sentiments of the chairman of the committee and show my appreciation to all of those members who came to present to the committee. All those individuals have a strong desire to make the education system the best they can possibly be in the Province of Prince Edward Island, and supporting that, we, as committee members, take the time to listen to them and they, as Islanders, take the time to come in and present to us.

Thank you to all those presenters, Madam Speaker.

With that, I'll move it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** Shall the report of the committee carry? Carried.

Oh sorry.

The hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

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

I want to thank the Chair and committee for the work that they did do. I did receive some of the transcripts from the presentations. We look forward to looking at the report in full, checking out exactly what's there, and I'll be working with a counterpart from higher education to look at what needs to be done further.

I like a lot of what I heard already, and we will be delving into it even further to make sure that we can still continue to improve the education of our students right across this province.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** Are you ready for the question?

Shall the report of the committee carry?  
Carried.

Any further committee reports?

**An Hon. Member:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries, Transportation and Rural Development, I beg leave to introduce a report of said committee and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Belfast-Murray River, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Gallant:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Belfast-Murray River, that the report of the committee be now adopted.

This report is an account of the committee activity since last reported to the Legislative Assembly.

Your committee is making the following recommendations for consideration to the Legislative Assembly.

1. Your committee is very pleased to hear that Island lobster harvesters have voted in favour of a 1 cent per pound levy to be applied to the marketing and promotion of Prince Edward Island lobster, and encourages government to assist them in the process of forming a marketing board so that the levy may be collected.

2. Your committee recommends that the lobster industry and the provincial government continue to follow through on the recommendations of the Maritime Lobster Panel, and urges both entities to continue working with their New Brunswick and Nova Scotia counterparts toward implementing the Value Recovery Strategy.

3. Your committee encourages the provincial government to continue to call on the federal government to acknowledge the realities of the seafood processing industry and provide access to temporary foreign labour in a fashion similar to the Seasonal Agricultural Worker program.

4. Your committee encourages the provincial government to work with the PEI Seafood Processors Association toward the development of a human resources strategy that will encourage more Islanders to seek work in PEI's seafood processing facilities.

5. Your committee encourages seafood processors to examine how efficiencies can be gained through technological changes to their operations, and to turn to Island companies to provide the technological innovation for their needs.

6. Your committee encourages government to facilitate and support the technological innovation partnerships suggested above whenever possible.

7. Your committee recommends that the PEI Aquaculture Leasing Board and Fisheries and Oceans Canada continue to suspend applications for adding oysters to mussel leases until a broad impact study can be completed on the potential environmental and economic effects of the "add a species" policy.

In conclusion, your committee thanks the various organizations and individuals who shared their views with the committee over the past several months.

Finally, your committee wishes to extend its congratulations to the PEI Fishermen's Association, the PEI Seafood Processors Association and the Abegweit and Lennox Island First Nations on obtaining Marine Stewardship Council eco-certification for the PEI lobster fishery.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** (Indistinct) the hon. Member for Souris-Elmira to speak to the committee's report.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'll just keep it short. As the fishery critic of Prince Edward Island it was a pleasure to work with the committee. When we were doing our recommendations, it took a lot of work to get the recommendations to where we want them.

I want to thank, especially all those that came in and spoke to the committee. It was great to listen to everybody out there across PEI and see what they had to say. What we did as a committee, we took all their views and we put them into recommendations as best we could.

It was great to work with the Chair, it was great to work with all committee members, and with that, thank you.

**Speaker:** Are you ready for the question, members?

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct).

**Speaker:** Shall the report of the committee carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

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

**Speaker:** Mr. Minister.

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

Madam Speaker, I move seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of Capital Supply for Her Majesty.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call upon the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter to Chair the Committee of the Whole House, and the hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Minister, do you have someone to bring to the floor?

**Mr. Sheridan:** I do. Our budget director, Jim Miles, is with us again, if we could bring him to the floor.

**Chair:** Okay, permission to bring Mr. Miles to the floor.

**An Hon. Member:** Granted.

**Chair:** Just –

**Mr. Sheridan:** Just – sorry.

**Chair:** I was just going to remind people where we are while Mr. Miles is coming.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Yesterday or when we last sat in committee we had read actually the whole down and read the total of the expenditures. We had gone through and we were in discussion on Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal on page 25.

Minister, you had something to say?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Sorry about that, Madam Chair.

It's just that I had a couple of questions that I had said I would bring back. On the Tyne Valley and Riverview manors' potential locations: the village of Tyne Valley has three properties inside the village guidelines that are potential sites, and they will be going to a selection committee very soon. On the Riverview manor they have narrowed that location as well, and they will be going into selection committee very soon here as well.

**Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Sheridan:** The last question that I had was the 2015-2016 capital budget of \$2 million will refresh 3,010 computers inside the education system. They asked how many that would translate into.

Thank you very much.

**Chair:** Sure.

Any questions under this other section that we had not completed, capital expenditures for Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal?

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Just a few questions down under capital improvements, particularly in the highways section, national and collector highways, I see there's a fairly significant increase in next year's budget over the previous years, approximately a \$9 million increase. Can you sort of give an overview of what projects are going to be concentrated on on that?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Sure, just for an overview, we talked about this last day when we were on the floor doing this.

This all comes down to the national infrastructure program that was introduced by the federal government, that \$25 million a year that we've been promised to be with no strings attached and now there are many strings attached.

So this year, with our \$25 million that was available, all we've been able to spend is the amount that we spent on the Souris Bridge as one project that was accepted, and as well the Tryon road construction.

Therefore we have an awful lot of money that hasn't been able to be taken advantage of this year. So we're hoping in the next fiscal that we will be able to link more of these dollars into the national and collector highways.

The department is under negotiations with the federal government to allow less strings to be attached to these dollars being spent. We're hoping that that is the case and we will be able to spend it on these types of initiatives.

**Chair:** Do you have a question?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yes.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Under the provincial paving we're up over \$600,000, I believe it is, from your estimate to the forecast for year end. Would that have to do with the additional paving that needed to be done out on the Plan B to correct the condition of that highway?

**Mr. Sheridan:** I'll let the minister answer that one because I do believe that that project came in under budget. But I will turn it over to the minister.

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

**Mr. Vessey:** That was – the price was in the original. There was no extra cost to the taxpayers on the seal coat with the Trans-Canada. We didn't put the seal coat on last November because it was too late in the season. We wanted the pavement to settle down and put it on in the early part of the

summer so it lets it heat – dry out the base underneath the pavement. That was all done by the contractor within the original agreement. There was no extra dollars.

**Mr. Aylward:** Chair?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Now that we're coming into the winter months again, and of course we're going to have frost going into the ground, what's the solution if we experience the same conditions as last year out on the plan B highway where essentially it almost became un-drivable because of the condition of the bumps?

**Mr. Vessey:** I believe the highway you're referring to is the Trans-Canada realignment project out in Bonshaw, if that's the one you're referring to?

**Mr. Aylward:** Plan B.

**Mr. Vessey:** The engineers knew that they didn't put the seal coat on for the reason that the work was done late into the fall. There was a lot of moisture in the road bed and it was fully anticipated – last winter was probably the one of the worst winters we had in over 40 years and with a heavy amount of frost, and that is what transpired over the winter.

We've got the seal coat on now and the right part of the season. The road bed had a chance to dry out so we fully anticipate that will be the end of maybe not all the heaving, but a lot of the heaving that was in the road to begin with last winter.

**Chair:** Back to the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Do we have assurances, then, from the engineers in your department that we won't experience those kinds of conditions on that highway again this year?

**Mr. Vessey:** That's a pretty tough question to ask the engineer to say that. We have a road bed in our province different than a lot

of other provinces in the country. There would not be a section of highway, probably, last winter in PEI or in the Mainland that did not heave because of the severity of the winter.

We anticipate a lot less washboarding on that section of highway, depending on how severe of a winter we have, but there has been other areas that in their first year had the same seal coat put on the following year, the problem was solved. We don't see that section of highway to be any different than any of the other areas that we've treated the same over the past years before I came in. That's just the way it works in PEI.

**Chair:** I'm going to go to Member from Souris-Elmira.

We're getting a little off this topic so can we just – do you have a question?

**Mr. Aylward:** Chair, I'm just asking questions regarding the capital estimates and where the money was spent so –

**Chair:** Yeah, that's great. I just want to remind people of that.

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Chair.

I'll ask the minister – he might want the transportation, I'm not sure – back to bridges. After I got home last night I had a number of phone calls on bridges, and yesterday the transportation minister committed to a bridge at North Lake. Just for reassurance – he said he's going to look at it or they're going to replace it?

**Chair:** Do you want to –

**Mr. LaVie:** Minister –

**Chair:** We'll defer that to the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. Vessey:** I never had a chance to talk to my bridge engineer today. I will speak to him again to see what is in the schedule tomorrow or if I get back – I won't see him

today but tomorrow morning, and I'll update you tomorrow.

**Chair:** Okay?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you.

**Mr. LaVie:** If they will look at it or if they're going to replace it?

**Mr. Vessey:** I'll check it out with the engineer to see where it is in their schedule, yes.

**Mr. LaVie:** Okay.

**Mr. Vessey:** Okay.

**Mr. LaVie:** And just –

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thanks, Chair.

Just one more question. Now that you're doing the – the transportation minister is doing the Souris Bridge. Is he going to pave on the east side of the Souris Bridge? Across the Souris causeway, after the bridge is done?

**Mr. Sheridan:** We can ask that question (Indistinct).

**Chair:** I'll defer that answer to the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. Vessey:** We'll have a look at it when the completion of the project is done, and if there's a possibility that we have it within our budget we'd do it, and it depends on our budget.

**Mr. MacKinley:** You've paved more than anybody else (Indistinct).

**Mr. LaVie:** Great MLA up there.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Go ahead, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Are you –

**Mr. MacKinley:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. LaVie:** Chair, are you (Indistinct) –

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira has the floor.

**Mr. LaVie:** Chair, I wonder if the minister is on budget with the bridge as we speak.

**Mr. Vessey:** Yes, yes. Everything is going well down there now, and actually, I think there are a few more lights that went down there the other day as well on the bridge. Am I correct?

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Go ahead, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thanks, Chair.

Yeah, I had the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal up to meet me after our second accident on the bridge and we decided that we needed more lights. Actually, I asked for three lights and he gave us four lights so we appreciate that. If I could just get the minister to just do some more work on the lines, and I think he will - he agreed to – so whenever the time comes.

Minister, they're on schedule also with the bridge –

**Mr. Vessey:** (Indistinct) a great fall down there, yes. They're on schedule.

**Mr. LaVie:** Are they ahead of schedule?

**Mr. Vessey:** I wouldn't want to say they're ahead of schedule. I'll say they're on schedule. They might be a little bit ahead, but you can lose that with the weather changes.

**Chair:** Okay?

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

I just want to ask a couple of questions down in the capital improvements-buildings section, particularly as it relates to government-owned buildings and properties

and specifically around the relocation of the government garage.

Has all of the land already been purchased for that relocation?

**Mr. Vessey:** Yes.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Also, as a follow-up to that question, are there any plans to purchase additional parcels of land that will abut that property? I've heard from some residents that maybe they're a little bit concerned that their properties, small parcels, are now going to be adjacent to the government garage site and they're concerned about their property value.

Are there any plans at all to look at buying some of these parcels to help these individuals with their concerns?

**Chair:** I'll just defer to the minister of infrastructure.

**Mr. Vessey:** We are talking to some of the landowners out there right now, hon. member. We're in discussions. I can't go into details of who we're talking to and what we're talking about. But yes, we've had some discussions with the neighbours in that area.

We've also met with the community council out there. We had public meetings on the proposal. We had two public meetings. The community, with the community council, are strongly in favour of the development that is currently going on in the area.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Wonder when we might actually start to see the construction of the actual existing physical government garage.

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

**Mr. Vessey:** You mean the structure of the office buildings, the mechanic (Indistinct), that part of the structure, is that what you're referring to?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yes.

**Mr. Vessey:** That will probably be two to three more years.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Vessey:** We'll continue to do that. We're looking at bringing over the bridge components, the salt dome, the sand dome, a lot of that stuff next summer to have it established there.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Can't hear the answer.

**Mr. Vessey:** We'll continue to move forward on that.

**Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

With regards to the land where the salt or the sand dome currently is up behind the –

**Mr. Vessey:** Behind where the French school is?

**Mr. Aylward:** Correct. Are there any future plans for that property?

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

**Mr. Vessey:** We've been looking at that property. It could go up for sale, that's an option. We haven't had it appraised yet. We'll do that after we get the property cleaned up and the materials moved off the site.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** In addition to that property – because the government-owned buildings fall under your department as well – the buildings that were being used to store health records in them, and they're being demolished, that property as well – that's some extremely prime real estate that literally goes right down to the water, the Hillsborough River that flows in behind there. It's a beautiful picturesque property. In addition to that, would you be looking at

putting some of that land up for sale for development?

**Mr. Vessey:** It's a possibility. We haven't had the discussion around that yet, but we will.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Anything further?

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, okay?

I'll read –

**Mr. LaVie:** I'll go now then, if he's done?

**Chair:** Pardon me?

**Mr. LaVie:** Question.

**Chair:** I thought you said you were done. Sorry.

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh no.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thanks, Chair.

I'll ask the question – I don't know where (Indistinct).

**Chair:** Yeah, I'm just trying to keep it a little on topic.

**Mr. LaVie:** Chair, to the minister. The land that the old Souris Consolidated School was on, what's happening with that?

**Chair:** I'll defer that to the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Mr. Vessey:** I'll have to get updated on that, hon. member. I don't know the answer to that question but I'll find out and bring it back to you.

**Mr. LaVie:** I'm just worried, the high mountain of clay that's there.

**Mr. Vessey:** That's being levelled off. (Indistinct) look into that. You had called me on that. I was looking into that. They told me the contractor would be notified on

it, and he was. Maybe he has to be notified again.

**Chair:** I believe, then, the minister of education has a comment.

**Mr. McIsaac:** Thank you very much, Chair.

That is being levelled off and it's going to be green space and play area. There's a playground area going in there. There's also a small skate park being fenced off for that as well. The rest of it was used up for the parking lot.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm glad the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development brought up the skateboard park. The town has to make the application to rural development for their share of the money for the land for the park, sorry. But they have to have the land in their name, and it hasn't happened yet, and they can't get the application that proves that the land is in their name. That hasn't happened yet.

**Mr. MacKinley:** (Indistinct) long-term lease.

**Mr. Vessey:** We're working on that, hon. member.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs, do you want to comment on that?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Again, that wouldn't be inside the capital budget, of course, for question, but as the ministers have said, they're working on that. They want to see the project go forward too. I'm sure we'll find a solution.

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah, they're anxious to get it, especially in the spring. They're delayed now.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Much appreciated.

**Mr. LaVie:** As long as it's being worked on. I trust them.

**Chair:** I'm just going to read the total here again.

Total Capital Expenditure: 74,526,600.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Okay, minister, I guess we each have one of these.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair make report to Madam Speaker.

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Chair:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Committee of the Whole House, I wish to report that the committee has gone into capital supply to be granted to Her Majesty and has come to certain resolutions thereon, which said committee I am directed to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive the same.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Madam Speaker, I move seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that the report of the committee be received.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Ms. Biggar:** Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture, that the 26<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 26, *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2015*, Bill No. 22, ordered for second reading.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Culture, that the said bill be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2015*, Bill No. 22, read a second time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

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

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call upon the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter to Chair the Committee of the Whole, and the hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

**Chair (Biggar):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2015*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

It's only one page –

**Mr. Sheridan:** Yeah, it's just a different little preamble.

**Chair:** It's just one page. Do you need anyone on the floor, minister?

**Mr. Sheridan:** No, I do not.

**Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I can speak to it if you would like before you start –

**Chair:** Perhaps the minister can speak to it?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yes, that would be great.

**Mr. Sheridan:** This is just the second piece – just what we passed a moment ago. It has

to come to the floor in the form of a bill, the second piece of this, and it appears exactly as we see here. The total will be just as we saw in the appropriation.

**Chair:** I'll just read through this.

Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures)  
2015

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal servants, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island, towards appropriating the several supplies raised for the exigencies of Her Majesty's Government and for the other purposes hereinafter mentioned, do humbly beseech that it be enacted:

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

1. There may be paid out of the Operating Fund, a sum not exceeding in the whole Seventy-Four Million, Five Hundred and Twenty-Six Thousand, Six Hundred Dollars (\$74,526,600) to be applied toward defraying the several Capital charges and expenses of the Public Service, not otherwise provided for, for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2016, as set forth in the Schedule.

2. There may be paid out of the Operating Fund –

[There was an audio interruption]

**Chair:** Minister, would you please? You might want to put that on mute, please.

I'll just start that again.

2. There may be paid out of the Operating Fund –

**An Hon. Member:** Cartoons.

**Chair:** – toward defraying the several Capital charges and expenses of the Public Service, not otherwise provided for, from the expiration of the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2016, until the passing of the Capital Estimates for the Fiscal Year ending

March 31, 2017, a sum sufficient based on the Capital Estimates for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2016.

We also have on the back the schedule for the capital expenditure.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Minister?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Shall the schedule carry as well? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2015.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the enacting clause.

**Chair:** Be it enacted – oh you want me to read that again? Oh sorry, I already read that, sorry.

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal servants, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island, towards appropriating the several supplies raised for the exigencies of Her Majesty's Government and for the other purposes herein mentioned, do humbly beseech that it be enacted.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Minister.

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

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Thanks, minister.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you very much.

**Chair:** Madam Speaker, as Chair of Committee of the Whole House having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2015*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I

move that the report of the committee be adopted.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and Deputy Premier, that the 3<sup>rd</sup> order of the day be now read.

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 3, Consideration of the Supplementary Estimates, in Committee.

**Speaker:** Mr. Minister.

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

Madam Speaker, I move seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and Deputy Premier, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of supply and supplementary estimates.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call upon the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter to Chair the Committee of the Whole House, and the hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Members, on your supplementary estimates on page five there's only one line that we need to carry and it is:

Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal:  
3,500,000.

Questions?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Thank you. Minister.

**Mr. Sheridan:** (Indistinct) kick it off or –

**Chair:** You go ahead.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair and that Chair make report to Madam Speaker.

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, I wish to report that the committee has gone into supplementary supply to be granted to Her Majesty and has come to certain resolutions thereon, which said resolutions I am directed to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive the same.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and Deputy Premier, that the report of the committee be now received.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Chair:** Madam Speaker, I move the report of the committee be now adopted.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, that the 27<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 27, *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2014*, Bill No. 23, ordered for second reading.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Fisheries,

Aquaculture and Rural Development, that the said bill be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2014*, Bill No. 23, read a second time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call upon the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter, and the hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

**Chair (Biggar):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2014*.

Hon. members, any questions?

Shall the bill carry?

**An Hon. Member:** Carried.

**Chair:** Minister, sorry.

**Mr. Sheridan:** This is just exactly what we just did with the appropriations. This is just second piece of the bill that is attached to our supplementaries.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Shall the schedule carry?

There is also a schedule.

The bill carried and the schedule carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2014*.

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the enacting clause.

**Chair:** May it please Your Honour:

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Thank you, minister.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2014*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move the report of the committee be adopted.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, that the 1<sup>st</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 1, Adjourned Debate on the Draft Address.

It had been adjourned by the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Just to reiterate a little bit about the throne speech and the draft address, obviously I'm in support of it. I think it's a great document to conclude a vision for Prince Edward Island and to have us move forward on this path.

I did want to highlight a couple of little items of note in the tourism perspective. We talked a little bit about that. The 2014 celebrations saw visitations up all across Prince Edward Island, that we broke records with the Charlottetown airport. Its numbers were up I think over 7.1%, and broke records on numerous months throughout the year. Campgrounds were also up over 8% and also broke records since records were kept. Overnight stays on the Island were up about 5.4%.

It was a tremendously successful season, and we look forward to growing the tourism industry well into 2015 and beyond.

With that, I support the throne speech and will be supporting that into the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I had a lot of stuff initially that I would have liked to talk about from this Speech From the Throne because I didn't think there was much in it, and it was kind of like a walk down memory lane for government. I guess I now understand why that is. I probably won't bother to get into it. It was, in fact, a walk down memory lane for the Premier, which is fantastic for him. But for Islanders there's still a province that needs to be operated and run.

As normal, we're always looking for the elected members to show some leadership, and I know with this bunch it's not very easy. They find that hard. They're perhaps a

little bit timid of it. It's not something that comes natural to them.

We know that – and it's outlined in the book here, the speech. There's a lot of talk about education and Islanders excelling in education. We don't feel that government's doing a great job in education. We made that perfectly clear. I'm not afraid to stand here and say it and talk about it again today.

We think that it's important that government recognizes its failures. PISA is a very important test. Whether or not you think it's the most important thing in the education system – it's probably not – but it's a great way to show where we are when we're talking with the rest of the world. When I talked about last night in the motion that we ran here in the House is that there's nothing wrong with recognizing weaknesses in any system, whether it be a government system, whether it be a system in your work, whether it's your home. There's nothing wrong with recognizing weaknesses and addressing them.

The importance of addressing the weaknesses in the education system is that we have 20,000 students in it today, give or take, who are going to go through the system and come out the other end and hope to have and find success. Many of them hope that they're going to be able to find it here on Prince Edward Island.

We need to do as much as we can to help ensure that that happens. I talked about the minister of innovation last night and the trade missions that they go on, and businesses go on through his department to showcase to the rest of the world what we have because we believe we have businesses on Prince Edward Island that have products that we can put in any marketplace anywhere in the world. We believe, and I believe it to be true, that there's opportunity for Prince Edward Island businesses anywhere in the world.

The important part of that is that by recognizing that it gives a competitive advantage to Island businesses. They know that they're going to be able to find themselves new and emerging markets because they believe they have a product that they can put anywhere in the world, that

they can compete with anywhere in the world.

That's what we need to be thinking, that's the way we need to think of education system. We need to think of the product of our education system, being students, are going to finish and be able to compete with anyone anywhere in the world for jobs, with their ideas, with new innovations. If they can do it right here on Prince Edward Island, it further feeds into the concept of building trade with other places through global business here on Prince Edward Island.

It's a circle. It's like a big circle. If we can put the students coming out the other end, if we can give them all the tools they need to be the best in the world, to be right there with all the best scoring systems in the world, we can build this circle where we have business opportunities created by our own knowledge economy.

We talked about it extensively, of course, this session to date, and a lot of our motions that we called here in the evenings and on Thursdays were about education. They weren't overly negative, though I know the education minister thought that they were negative. They weren't overly negative. What they were was an opportunity for us to say: Hey, there's opportunities and there's a new way, all you have to do is face the reality that the system that you have in place isn't necessarily the best system for Prince Edward Island anymore. That's why we believe that the minister needs to address some of these issues and first recognize.

What he did bring in is he plans to install wireless Internet, which would have been fantastic seven years ago when that was hard to find. It's not that hard to find anymore. And seven thousand new computers. I mean, this is the minister who cut that technology budget here two years ago and didn't provide any. All he's doing is playing catch-up for a bad decision that he had made along the way.

So 20,000 students in 1,100 classrooms across the province deserve to have a minister who cares about them and who believes that they can be the best in the world. Who believes they can compete against the best in the world. While it's important, I believe, to make investments in

education, and the bricks-and-mortar pieces of it are great and the tangible assets that you purchased are great, but to think that government's going to see a great benefit from wireless Internet and 7,000 computers is completely off base, in my opinion.

We know and we hear through post-secondary institutes – and they tell us all the time that they're getting students and they need to upgrade their math. Holland College says it now in the trades. I've talked to some of the people who run trade courses and they say: We get them, sometimes their math isn't good enough and we need to immediately put students in math. These are students who graduated with grade 12 math. How is it possible that a system finishes at the other end and you have a certificate in your hand that says you did this, but when you go on to the next stage in your education, the very first day you walk in the door, you're told you don't actually have what the paper says that you have? That's what this government is providing to our students.

The social pass has been an important thing to us. I'm glad to hear the House support us and putting the social pass to committee because the committee can look at it through a critical eye and we can invite people in to speak. There are a lot of experts out in the field. There are a lot of experts in the Maritimes and I have had an opportunity to talk to a few of them, I wouldn't say a great number of them because it's hard to dig them all out. There are quite a few people who are passionate about education in the Maritimes and feel they have a good handle on it. But as I talk to people, there are lots of great ideas out there, and I know when that committee gets up and going I will be recommending a few people who could come to that committee who could provide some good critical thought and thinking towards the social pass and education on Prince Edward Island.

It's becoming tougher and tougher for Islanders, and this is the government who has increased taxation on Prince Edward Island to help pay their debts. They continue to drive more and more debt in this province, and they seem to think that the only way they could possibly balance their budget is through taxation. It's a very poor method for an economy that isn't very

strong to begin with. Taxation is not the answer to improving economy. Taxation, sure, it could help government get a short-term gain, a short-term infusion of cash to help better their books of the day. But if a government is very forward thinking and looks at governing the way that they should, the way that's appropriate, I think you would see that taxation isn't the answer for a strong economy.

We've struggled in Prince Edward Island for a number of years to try to create a strong economy. This goes back a number of years, and I realize that we're small, but some of the things that we know now today put us at an advantage. We know that Prince Edward Island is a great test-bed for new and emerging technologies, for new companies. I'm sure the innovation minister knows that as well as anybody, that a great way to attract business on Prince Edward Island is our size. For a lot of years our size was a disadvantage. Really, in the growing technological economy out there I think that there's an opportunity for us to be on the ground floor.

We need to do what we can do to help grow the economy on Prince Edward Island and grow business in the province. It's important that the government start taking steps away from increased taxation as a method to govern because taxes and governing aren't the same thing, and I would expect that this government would know that, and they appear not to, but Tories know that. Tories know that taxation is not the way to a strong economy.

I think that we need to be very assertive when it comes to building the economy. We need to be very assertive when it comes to reducing taxes so that Islanders feel like they can survive, so they don't feel like they have to leave for Alberta. I know I've talked about this in the House before. I know several people who, over the course of the last two or three years, who had good jobs, picked up and left because they were sick of living cheque to cheque, which is basically the way they were living here. They would have been viewed as people who had good jobs in their community.

When it comes to the point where people with good jobs are leaving because they know that there's a better life for them

somewhere else, it's really time to look and say: How can we improve the life here on Prince Edward Island? How can we put money back in the pockets of the people where it belongs in Prince Edward Island?

It's not a bad thing that people have money. It's not a bad thing if they get to keep more of the money they earn. There are not a lot of people who are going to take that money and put it in the bank and never, ever spend it. For a lot of those people that money is going to be spent and it's going to help them live a more balanced life where they don't feel like they're always behind. That money will remain in the economy and it will inevitably help government, which is how a strong economy works. I find it hard to believe that I'm explaining how a strong economy works, but obviously this government probably needs to hear it because they clearly don't understand.

It's funny, when I read this part about safeguarding our environment – it's a frustrating piece to talk about because never has there been so much talk and so little action in any portfolio in the history of governing as there has been on the environment here on Prince Edward Island. It was great that there was a committee struck to deal with water issues in this province. As I said the day that the committee released their report to the Legislative Assembly and I spoke to it, I said that it's great that they did the work for the minister because the minister clearly wasn't interested, or perhaps capable – probably both – of doing that work.

Maybe it's time to rely more on the committees where the ministers aren't capable. Maybe a group of eight or nine people has a better knowledge base than one, particularly in the areas where there's considerable weakness, and environment clearly is one of them. The government has talked about a water act and it's been on and off the books here for a number of years, and it's been kind of bandied around, and I see it made the Speech From the Throne here this year. It will be interesting to see how much consultation there is, where they're going to try to push this legislation through, and see who they'll actually consult with.

On the education front, I feel like – or sorry, the health care front. Health care has been a

weakness of this government as well, and I don't think that they really have a great grasp at understanding how they're failing Islanders. I know the federal government had made a multi-year commitment to them that laid out exactly how much money they were going to get every year. It's funny to hear from the minister that that multi-year arrangement, over and over again, is termed as a cut when in fact it is an arrangement that he should be able to plan by because year after year he will know exactly how much money he is going to get. He's failing Islanders each and every day.

I know there's a report out by the Fraser Institute today, actually, and many people will probably start reading and hearing about it, and I'm sure you'll see it on the news here before too long. You may even hear it in Question Period before the House closes. It talks about wait times and how long the wait times are on Prince Edward Island, and it's a very detailed report. I would suggest that everyone has a look at it and gets up to speed on it because it's pretty damning to government to talk about – sorry, Madam Speaker – it talks about the – each individual – it breaks it down very well to different things that you could have surgery for that you may wait for. It's broken down in great detail. It's a 110-page report, I believe. I only had a chance before the House opened today to have a quick look at it. I know on each and every page all kinds of information jumped out. There is a lot of people waiting for a long time when it comes to health care services on Prince Edward Island. It's not a matter of weeks, in some cases it's a matter of a year, a year and a half, that's there's wait for some procedures that are out there.

Government needs to do a better job because the wait times continue to increase. Over the past seven and a half years the wait times have gotten longer and longer. That can't be a good thing considering we have an aging population, and this government has known that our population has been aging for all of their seven and a half years.

On the front of seniors, I know that there was an announcement by the Community Services and Seniors Minister, and it's in the Speech From the Throne, that the cap for the senior home renovation is increased. The problem with it is that – I know that probably each and every member of this

House has fielded calls and complaints about the program and the way it's administered.

The problem with it, in my opinion, is it's not necessarily based on who has the most need, it's who can get in line the quickest or who gets their piece of paper stamped at the right time so they get to the top of the pile. I know I heard from several people who got in –

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** I have seniors who didn't get any money this year.

**Ms. Docherty:** That's not possible (Indistinct).

**Leader of the Opposition:** There's plenty seniors who didn't get any money to renovate their homes this year because they stood in line, they got there at 8:00 a.m. When the door opened they walked in and got their sheet stamped and figured that because they were first in line at their own Access Centre that they would receive money to fix, in some cases, their roofs, in some cases windows that leaked, in some cases where more insulation was needed, basic home repair type things that are needed out there, and waited for three months only to be turned down. I know I fielded a number of calls about that myself.

It was really shameful to think that there was a process put in place where it was more or less some sort of a lottery or a – I don't even know what you would call it – a hunger games-style money grab. It should be based on need or there should be more money. If there's that much need that at 8:00 a.m. the money is all run out, when 8:00 a.m. is the deadline, there needs to be more money. I know many members of this House would agree with that. I know many members of this House have received calls about that exact program.

Of course, this is the minister who kept money in her budget rather than spending it on people who were in need in the spring and by all accounts it could have been much more than we even know. When the books are out we'll get a clearer picture of what exactly she's up to there.

It's unfortunate for the people in need. Perhaps it's the wrong minister to be responsible for people in need, and I think many members of this House would probably agree with me on that.

It's a Speech From the Throne that really didn't have much meat in it. Like you say, it was a little bit of a history book and it was a walk down memory lane. I don't think this is a government who is any longer serious about being a government in Prince Edward Island. I think this is a government who is very tired and I think this is a government who is bankrupt of ideas, and the Speech From the Throne would be a clear indicator of that.

With that, I conclude, Madam Speaker, and thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** Are you ready for the question, members?

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

**Speaker:** I'm going to ask the Clerk to read the motion before the House.

Does the mover wish to close out debate? Sure.

The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As the mover, I would like to close debate on the Speech From the Throne.

I do appreciate, as everybody in the House – most members have had an opportunity to speak to it and to talk about the good things in it, (Indistinct) their communities, their districts and Islanders within their communities and districts, a chance to look at the past performance of the government in a positive way and a positive way going forward.

With that, I will close the debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** At this time, I will ask the Clerk to read the Motion before the House.

You may rise at this time, members.

**Clerk:** Moved by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood, seconded by the hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter, the following motion:

Resolved that the following Message be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, to offer the humble thanks of this House for the gracious speech which he had been pleased to make at the opening of the present session.

**To His Honour**

The Honourable H. Frank Lewis  
Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island

**May It Please Your Honour:**

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island at this time in session assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to your Honour for the gracious speech with which your Honour had been pleased to open the present Session.

**Speaker:** Those in favour, please say "aye."

**Some Hon. Members:** Aye!

**Speaker:** Contrary, "nay."

The ayes have passed.

I'm going to call upon the hon. Government House Leader at this time.

**Mr. Gallant:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, that the Address in Reply be engrossed and presented to His Honour by the Whole House.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Gallant:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, that the same Committee which prepared the Address in Reply be a Committee of this House to wait upon His Honour to know his pleasure as to when he will be pleased to receive the House and its address.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, that the 28<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 28, *Municipal Statutes Amendment Act 2014*, Bill No. 27, ordered for second reading.

**Speaker:** Mr. Minister.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, that the said bill be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** *Municipal Statutes Amendment Act 2014*, Bill No. 27, read a second time.

**Speaker:** Mr. Minister.

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

Madam Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call upon the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Sherwood to Chair the Committee of the Whole and the hon. minister to present the legislation.

**Chair (Mitchell):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *Municipal Statutes Amendment Act 2014*.

We will have a brief statement.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I do have Albert MacDonald with me as well, Mr. Chair, so we could ask if he could come on and I could explain a little bit while we're waiting for Albert to come.

**Chair:** Agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Mr. MacDonald may enter onto the floor.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you.

Just a little bit of an explanation, Mr. Chair.

This is more readily known as the cosmetic pesticide act with regard to municipalities being able to make bylaws inside their own jurisdiction. This is something that the municipalities came to us, the Federation of Municipalities came to myself as being responsible for their acts. There are three of them: the *Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act*, the *City of Summerside Act* and just the *Municipalities Act*.

This is going to be on a voluntary basis only. They do not have to enact this. It's up to them if they would like to do it or not. Therefore there will be no financial or physical assistance provided by the province for this.

There are seven other provinces out there that do this across our nation, but none of them allow the municipal jurisdictions to oversee golf courses or agriculture. This is for lawn care treatment only. We are doing just what the other provinces have done.

This entire bill and the writing of it has been supported by my colleague the Minister of Environment, Labour and Justice and Attorney General, and I appreciate their input from the department to help us with that.

With it, it will – it's quite self-explanatory as to what municipalities can do inside their jurisdiction under this bill. As you see the exemptions inside, where they cannot have any say over agriculture, forestry, golf course, etc., and that is because it takes years and years of training to be able to

oversee something as complicated as those. But we feel, as have seven other provinces, that they do have the wherewithal to manage the actual pesticide regulation bylaws that would be for lawns. So we are going to pass that over to them to make it more stringent than what the provincial laws are. They can't bring it down any lower, but they can enhance some of the work that is being done now.

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

**Mr. Aylward:** No.

**Ms. Biggar:** Carry the bill.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yes, can I ask a question on it first?

**Chair:** Yes, questions.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Have you consulted with all of the municipalities on this?

**Mr. Sheridan:** No, and the reason I haven't consulted with them all, hon. member, is the pure fact that it's just voluntary. We've had four of them come forward that want it so we're just putting it out on a voluntary basis.

If they want to move forward and put it in place and that bylaw is in their jurisdiction, they can do it, but other than that it will still be maintained by the province in every jurisdiction and all other municipalities. So if, say, Stratford, does decide to go and do this and the other municipalities don't, this province will continue to provide the guidance and the oversight of it inside those jurisdictions.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay, but (Indistinct) –

**Chair:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you. The guidance and oversight of it, though, is nothing, right? It's either you have it or you don't? If you choose to use it, then you can ban certain pesticides, or cosmetic pesticides, but if you don't choose to use it then there's really no law –

**Mr. Sheridan:** It just reverts, yes, of course. We have our pesticide act, right, that has limited some cosmetic pesticides in the province –

**Leader of the Opposition:** Right.

**Mr. Sheridan:** - so all other jurisdictions that don't opt to up their restrictions, then they will remain under the province's guidelines and we'll continue to police and monitor that usage.

Through the federation of municipalities we talked about that and they talked about how best to do this, and this was the best solution so that we don't ever infringe upon their own rights. They get to make the decision on the bylaw if they would like. If they want to bring it in, and they have the wherewithal to do that both physically and financially, then they'll bring it in if they so choose.

**Chair:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Yeah, just on that front, then. Who was involved in the consultation process, then?

**Mr. Sheridan:** It started with the federation of municipalities. That's John Dewey with the president, Bruce MacDougall. They brought it forward on a number of occasions to us to talk to municipal affairs. Albert MacDonald and his staff, of course to myself and deputy minister David Arsenault as well.

Then, as you saw as the elections were ramping up this fall, a number of municipalities decided that they also wanted to be able to offer that and so they came to us and asked us again: Could we do that? I made a commitment to them that I would bring it to the floor of the House and make it reasonable, make it so that they could bring it forward in their own jurisdiction, that they could enhance the protection they would like to offer to their constituents.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Environment, Labour and Justice and Attorney General would like to make a comment based on your question.

**Ms. Sherry:** Just in regard to the question the member is asking, we actually met with a number of people from the community of Stratford. We also had conversations with the city of Summerside. It was also brought up at the federation of municipalities, like the minister of finance had said.

They actually came to us requesting us to consider this and then we had consultation with the department of finance to move it forward for them.

**Mr. Sheridan:** (Indistinct) much appreciated.

**Chair:** I have a couple more questions.

I'm going to go to the Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter, please.

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, just for clarification, because there are a lot of small little community councils and all of that, and at the moment they're under our provincial bylaws. Is it correct that this does not change that unless they enact their own bylaws in regard to this? So they are not bound to adopt this unless they so choose?

**Mr. Sheridan:** That's the very most important point in this entire legislation, that this does not change anything for any municipality. Unless a municipality brings it forward inside their bylaws and wants to enact a more stringent delivery of these exemptions and restrictions, then they will stay completely under the provincial banner as it stands today, and I would fully expect that the vast majority of municipalities will do just that.

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, with a question.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just a question. If a municipality does join, can they opt out and go back under the provincial program?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Sure. I mean, this is something that we're going to work collaboratively with them. If, for instance, someone that has the wherewithal – like if Stratford, that has the financial wherewithal, to do this and they take it on and they try it for a couple of years, hon. member, and then they come back to the province and they say: You know what? They really can't police this, it's become too enormous a project, and we'd like to pass it back to the province, by all means we would respect that wish and we would take it back.

**Mr. LaVie:** Okay.

**Chair:** The hon. Member for Stratford-Kinlock with a question.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Of course, representing Stratford-Kinlock, there are a very vocal group in my district, and rightfully so, with regards to this whole issue around cosmetic pesticides. Being a member of the board of the Canadian Cancer Society as well I certainly realize the importance of this bill and putting restrictions on particularly cosmetic pesticides.

However, one of the councillors from the town of Stratford and she's also the vice-president for the Federation of PEI – association of –

**Mr. Sheridan:** Federation of municipalities?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah, thank you very much. Diane Griffin. She came out in the *Guardian* the other day and she expressed her disappointment over the bill itself. She finds its lacking in particular the water and air quality clause that she feels should have been in there that many other jurisdictions across, as you said, our great country have.

I'm wondering: Why was that omitted? Why was that left out?

**Mr. Sheridan:** We worked across all of the country just to see what restrictions are put in place, and that entire all-encompassing type of health and wellness was discouraged by the legislative writer. We looked across the nation to see exactly what it was and the vast majority does it in exactly this fashion.

Again, this is a first step. We'll let the municipalities make their decision on this one, and if everything goes well and we want to continue to look at other options down the road, that's something that we would be very open to. But at this – I think it's a great first step. Look forward to the municipalities' participation in this and how they actually engulf it and put it in place in their jurisdiction.

**Mr. Aylward:** There was a lot of talk –

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

There was a lot of talk back a number of years ago about cosmetic pesticide – and the minister at the time, I believe, was the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park – there was a lot of discussion, a lot of debate, around putting restrictions and banning products, and then at the end of the day the government essentially banned one product and a lot of Islanders felt let down on that.

I'm just afraid that the government is doing the same thing here again, that they're not putting enough meat on the bone here. With the air and water quality clause missing from this bill that it's not as strong and it's not as restrictive as perhaps the municipalities were actually asking for and these groups that are – that were essentially fighting for this legislation – it's not what they were looking for as well. Because they certainly have done the research. They know that these chemicals – if you spray something on a plant and that plant ceases to live, then that's not good for any living organism. Essentially we're living organisms, so if it's killing a plant it's not healthy for us as well. I'm just expressing my concern that this is not strong enough and it doesn't go far enough.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Sure.

**Chair:** The hon. Member for Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

What measures are you prepared to make with the municipalities to amend this piece of legislation down the road?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Again, as I spoke about earlier, let's give the municipalities an opportunity to enact this and see how we do with regard to it.

Now just one point to your preamble to that question. It is very clear that they can restrict whatever they want with regard to lawn pesticides, right? So there's no limit and, as you say if they spray it on a plant and it kills it, this is their call now. They can make that decision. I would not and I did not – we did not encompass all of the overall questions that they're asking for. We needed to restrict it in a fashion very similar to what the vast majority of the provinces have done.

This is a great first step for municipalities. They can take this on, put the bylaw in place, be able to police and move on the restrictions. Once they've done that then they can prove their ability to maintain any type of bylaw like this. Our door is always open and we listen very acutely to the federation.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Don't you think it would have made much more sense for the province to put these restrictions in place right at the top level? The province has much more resources to control the application of these chemicals and to police it than the municipalities do. A lot of the municipalities are struggling right now to keep up with their own issues and their duties.

In the town of Stratford, for instance, one of the number one issues that we have is trying to figure out a way to come up with the money to relocate our sewage lagoon so that we can have economic development on our waterfront which right now is one of the prime pieces of real estate in Charlottetown-Stratford area.

But if all of a sudden the province is essentially passing the buck to the municipalities to police and control this and to put these bans in place because the province just doesn't have, essentially, the stomach to do so – and I don't know why you don't, because we know from scientific research that these chemicals are harmful to

human beings as they are plants. I just don't understand why the government, the top layer of bureaucracy here on Prince Edward Island would not see fit to protect Islanders.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Just to answer that question. Very simply, Mr. Chair, is that the province is very pleased with the cosmetic pesticide enhancement that we put in place a number of years ago.

At this time it seems to be working very well and we're very pleased. There wouldn't be any reason for us to enact any enhancement. What we've done here is to listen to the federation of municipalities. A number of municipalities have made it election issues. I'd love to see someone enact it and put it in place and try to police and monitor this, see how it goes for them.

At this point the province isn't passing any buck or have any lack of stomach for any decision-making on this because we're very pleased with the actual level of pesticide change that we brought in a number of years ago.

At this we're very pleased where we are. We're just simply allowing them to enhance if they'd like to do it inside their jurisdiction. It's what they've asked for and we're delivering. It's up to them at that point to make the decision inside the municipalities.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock (Indistinct) question?

**Mr. Aylward:** You can go over there. I might have some more (Indistinct).

**Chair:** I've a couple of more members with questions.

The hon. Member from Tyne Valley-Linkletter.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

Another question for the minister. At the present time government pays for enforcing all this particular bill, but if a small municipality does enact this legislation under their bylaws, who is picking up the tab for that?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Any municipality that wants to take this step up and enhance their bylaw, as is talked about in this bill, it will be the responsibility of this municipality. That could be big or small. Smaller municipalities would be less an issue and maybe they can afford and maybe they don't care to enhance it higher than what the province has already put in place.

We're very pleased. As you would know, what we put in as restrictions a number of years ago seems to be working very well across the province. Now if a certain municipality feels that they would like to up it inside their jurisdiction, that's now going to be their choice, but they will not be forced to do it. Therefore, there is no further cost to them unless they want to enhance it. By that there will be no assistance for any municipality wanting to change their bylaws.

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Question, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

**Mr. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the minister for bringing this forward. Being a former municipal councillor member for 14 years, I think that municipalities can run this and run it pretty efficiently if they want to. It's not restricting them in any way. They've asked for it by resolution of their councils and they've been approved by their council. The city of Charlottetown, which I represent parts of – sorry, there's six other of us. You get the capital city requesting something from the Province of Prince Edward Island and the Province of Prince Edward Island has to listen, and you've listened and you've taken their request and put it forward.

My opinion is is that we live in an urban/rural province, and this is more an urban issue, I'd say, than a rural issue, especially for lawn pesticides, because we live so close together and the children are playing so close together. It's a matter of saying: My close neighbour to me, I want to ensure that my family is safe, and therefore I want a bylaw to make sure it's safe.

So in an urban area, which is subdivisions, downtown Charlottetown, things like that, I

think it has a tremendous affect in those areas. If it works in urban Charlottetown, you've also made it available to every other municipality, so it's available to them.

I think the fear of municipalities going in and shutting down agriculture is unfounded. Being a municipal councillor from the city of Charlottetown, we knew quite adamantly that if rural PEI's not doing good, Charlottetown's not doing good. That was one of our main principles when we were in office over there. We knew that if rural PEI wasn't doing good, Charlottetown wasn't doing good.

To somebody putting out the fear that you're going to have Charlottetown banning pesticides for everything, they're a pretty responsible bunch, I know. The mayor and his council are intelligent people. I think this law is a good piece of legislation, and I think they are pretty capable people of making a decision, and I don't think they're going to make a decision that's going to detriment the Province of Prince Edward Island.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Two very good points, Mr. Chair, that the rural piece of it is so important.

We all know in the rural areas, we may be three miles apart from our neighbour. So it's a very good point. And just as he mentions with the agriculture piece, I truly believe that all Islanders understand agriculture. I truly accept what you say on that.

**Mr. Brown:** I believe (Indistinct) wouldn't have put agriculture in their exemption, I think, the municipalities would understand in those terms.

**Chair:** Members, do you require the bill to be read clause by clause or (Indistinct) the bill?

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *Municipal Statutes Amendment Act 2014.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the enacting clause.

**Chair:** Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of

the Province of Prince Edward Island as follows.

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *Municipal Statutes Amendment Act 2014*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that the 24<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 24, *An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act*, Bill No. 25, ordered for second reading.

**Speaker:** Mr. Minister.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that the said bill be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** *An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act*, Bill No. 25, read a second time.

**Speaker:** Mr. Minister.

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

Madam Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call upon the hon. Member from Tracadie-Hillsborough Park to Chair the Committee of the Whole and the hon. minister.

**Chair (Watts):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

**Mr. Aylward:** Chair, if we could just have an overview for the time being, and then maybe make that assessment following the overview.

**Chair:** Thank you, hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I have manager of pensions, Terry Hogan, with us there, if we could bring him on the floor.

**Chair:** Permission to bring his –

**Ms. Biggar:** Granted.

**Mr. Aylward:** Granted.

**Mr. Sheridan:** While we're waiting for Terry to reach the floor, I'll just give you an overview of what we're doing here.

This is a continuation of what was brought to the House last spring where we did ensure that the pension will be strong for many years to come. This one will oversee the civil which oversees a vast majority of provincial civil servants. The second one will be teachers that we'll bring on right after this. Virtually the exact same bill.

So just to this the overview for the changes, the amendments that we promised the unions that we would bring forward, is that

there is a change in governance and I'll explain those to you as we go along.

The second piece is that the actuary and the work that they do to now put it forward to ensure that we will have indexing going forward wanted clarification on wording in here making sure the funding commitment is firmly there. First, being that we're going to fund the plan to 122% of liabilities, and second, that we'll cover the full cost of indexation for the years 2014-2015 and 2016 during transition. That they would have that in place. We wanted that wording clearer than what it was in the spring sitting, so that wording has now been clarified and the actuary would have the work.

The third one is introducing changes to deal with the division of pension assets, and that's talking about former spouses, former partners, the death of such and contingent indexation portion upon lump sum payments. Separate pension approach for indexation awarded to former spouse and former partners will be consistent with other plan members. Just a number of little plan changes in there to be associated with the spouses.

Those three changes are here inside it. The big change for number one is for governance, that there will be a new commission and we'll give a little bit different oversight of the responsibilities around our pensions.

First one is that there will be the commission associated with the civil service, it will be more responsible for administering the pension. They will have a retiree representative, which we never had before, and we have investment monitoring responsibility attached to this commission. The Master Trust will continue, members, if you remember how it went before. Master Trust oversaw the pension funds. We're now going to have two commissions, one representing civil and one representing teachers. We'll still have the Master Trust where they will maintain the lower investment fees but the commissions will now have oversight role for the plan assets.

Those are three things that we worked through with the unions to ensure that they did have a stronger governance role.

I think with that, Mr. Chair, I will take any questions on it.

I think that part of it – this is a continuation, as I said, to ensure the pensions will be there for years to come for our civil servants, and rightfully so. I'm very pleased with the work that Terry Hogan and his crew did with the unions over the past year. It took us actually two and a half years to bring it to fruition. Springtime saw us make these changes and the continuation ensuring that these enhancements and the changes to governments would be in place.

**Chair:** Thank you, minister, for that explanation.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) bill.

**Chair:** Terry, could you introduce yourself for the Hansard?

**Terry Hogan Manager:** Terry Hogan, manager of pension and benefits.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Any other questions?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yes.

**Chair:** The hon. Member for Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

The minister spoke about the clause in here where the pension would be indexed for 2014, 2015, 2016, up to 2017. What happens after 2017 exactly? How is that funded then?

**Mr. Sheridan:** The way it works is just as we explained it in the spring sitting, that the indexation is no longer guaranteed, but what we did by setting it up, that we're funding the plan to 122%, it gives us such a long runway as we move forward. Even seeing a catastrophic drop as we saw back in 2008 would not see indexing be impacted in a year unless that it would happen in, say, 2018.

This long runway, giving it funding to 122%, gives it a great launch pad to start with. Then there are a number of triggers that will be in place that once they get down below the 122%, if there's a prolonged

downturn in the economy, where it triggers more investment by both the plan members and by the province. The investment by the province is about almost four to one as the triggers kick in for the members. There is a great contingency to continue to provide indexation, but there is no guarantee.

When you look across the nation at all of the changes that have taken place on different pension plans, I think we've struck a real sweet spot. Most of our unions that were a part of this solution over the two and a half years feel that that is the case. As you see here, we wanted it to be a transition time, 2014, 2015, 2016. They know what they will receive, and the funding to 122% gives them a very good start to seeing indexation continue into the foreseeable future.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

[A cell phone rang]

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Seem to have a phone or something going off here.

On page 2 we have the administration – we talk about the commission itself. These 12 commissioners, would they receive an honorarium or would they be paid to sit on this commission?

**Mr. Sheridan:** All of these members are members of the plan and are civil servants therefore, and so no one expects that they should be receiving an honorarium for their participation in this. Most of them feel very honoured to do this and be part of what is so important to them all.

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay, so in 4(3)(a) you have "six persons appointed by the Minister." What's the process that will be taken to identify those individuals? Will people put their name forward or will the minister just arbitrarily pick six people?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Terry is just going to bring them out for me, just for the ones that are represented by the employer, which is –

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah.

**Mr. Sheridan:** – government.

We would have someone from civil, someone from health, human resource-wise, someone from payroll corporately, someone from finance and inside the health area, the comptroller is vice-chair and the Treasury Board secretary would be the chair. So those six people will represent that –

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay.

**Mr. Sheridan:** – as the employer.

**Mr. Aylward:** All right, thank you.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Any more questions?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yeah, Chair?

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

Just on that same section, you have that the minister will appoint the chairperson and the vice-chair person of the commission from the commissioners appointed under clause 4(3)(a). How will that be determined as far as who the chair (Indistinct) –

**Mr. Sheridan:** We laid it out there clearly that the chair will be the Treasury Board secretary and the vice-chair will be the comptroller of the province.

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Any further questions?

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

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

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, that the 25<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 25, *An Act to Amend the Teachers' Superannuation Act*, Bill No. 24, ordered for second reading.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, that the said bill be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** *An Act to Amend the Teachers' Superannuation Act*, Bill No. 24, read a second time.

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

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

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call upon the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to chair the Committee of the Whole House, and the hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

**Chair (Casey):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Teachers' Superannuation Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

**Mr. Aylward:** Chair, could we have an explanation first? Then we'll determine after that if we need the bill clause by clause.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I'll just bring Terry Hogan, manager of pensions, back on the floor.

While he's coming, I'll give that overview.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you.

**Mr. Sheridan:** This bill is just an exact replica for all intents and purposes as to what we just saw with the CSSA: the same requirements, the changes to our commission standards that I talked about first, so that there's more oversight by each of these unions, exactly the same as the civil. Inside the same promises that were made last year. The clarification on the wording is very important to make sure that we do fund the plan to 122%, and that we will cover the cost of indexation for 2014, 2015 and 2016. The third piece, again, just exactly as the same, the changes to deal with the division of pension assets with regard to spouse and spousal and changing of those.

The bill is identical in its wording. Just that we do have the two bills, one for civil and one for teachers. As I say, for all intents and purposes, are exactly the same.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Again, the government is looking at the indexing for 2014, 2015 and 2016. Are there any projections on what that cost is going to be?

**Mr. Sheridan:** With those three years?

**Mr. Aylward:** Yes.

**Mr. Sheridan:** With that we put an actuarial report together. Those numbers will be available in December to look at those actual costs. Is it fair to say anything at this point, Terry, before the report comes back from the actuary to put a number on that?

**Terry Hogan Manager:** Yes.

**Mr. Sheridan:** It's still yes. So those numbers by the actuary have to be here by December for us. We could give you an exact number at that point as to what the number will be for those three years. At this point we were all working on the very best estimates, and now we'll have the exact numbers, and that's what the committees will be doing. The commissions will be overseeing what the actuary comes back with each year after that to determine how much indexation will be awarded.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you. In December we'll have actual numbers?

**Mr. Sheridan:** That's correct.

**Mr. Aylward:** But you said you were working off estimates. Can you give us a ballpark estimate? Are we talking \$10 million year here, are we talking \$100 million of the year?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Just a little bit less than \$15 million for this plan would be a fair estimate, but again, an estimate, right? So we just –

**Mr. Aylward:** Sorry, so it was 1-5?

**Mr. Sheridan:** That's both plans. Sorry, Terry is telling me that that is both plans, the indexation, so –

**Mr. Aylward:** Civil service and teachers –

**Mr. Sheridan:** So teachers would be much less than that. Percentage-wise, Terry, ballpark, one-third even? Up to about a third of that, so \$5 million. A little bit less than five.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Per year.

**Mr. Aylward:** Per year, total.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Correct, for teachers.

**Mr. Aylward:** Just for teachers.

**Mr. Sheridan:** So 15 was overall, just below 15 –

**Mr. Aylward:** Per year.

**Mr. Sheridan:** – is the estimate per year for indexation for those guaranteed to get us to 2014, 2015 and 2016.

**Mr. Aylward:** Two groups, yeah. All right, great.

Thank you.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thanks very much, Chair.

Just want to go into the commission as well, again. In the other commission we have 12, this one we have 8. We have three persons appointed by the minister. Are there specific positions from education or –

**Mr. Sheridan:** Terry's going to break that down –

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay, perfect, thank you.

**Mr. Sheridan:** – and give that to me. Do you have it right there, Terry, too?

**Terry Hogan Director:** The department of finance appoints one on the employer side and the department of education appoints three, one which would be the deputy

minister of education. Typically it's somebody from finance or human resources for the other two seats.

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay.

**Mr. Sheridan:** The teachers already have this commission in place, is that correct?

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay, and then we have three reps from the PEI teachers' fed –

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

**Mr. Aylward:** Thank you, Chair.

We have three representatives from the PEI Teachers' Federation. We don't know, offhand, are they executive members or could they be members at large?

**Mr. Sheridan:** Yes, they have to be contributors to the plan.

**Mr. Aylward:** Of course.

**Mr. Sheridan:** But they are appointed by the teachers.

**Mr. Aylward:** And then, of course, one who is a pensioner appointed by the PEITF.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Exactly.

**Mr. Aylward:** Okay.

**Mr. Sheridan:** Thank you very much.

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the title.

**Chair:** *An Act to Amend the Teachers' Superannuation Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Sheridan:** I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

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

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

#### Speaker's Ruling

**Speaker:** Hon. members, at this time, before I turn the floor over to government to continue on in Orders of the Day, I would like to address the point of order that was raised the other day by the Member from Souris-Elmira.

He raised on a point of order and, referring to the Committee of the Whole House proceedings under *An Act to Amend the Fisheries Act* (Bill No. 21), asserted that the Chair should not have entertained a motion that the bill pass in Committee of the Whole House as the opposition had more questions on the bill and closure had not been invoked.

Hon. members, I wish to draw your attention to rule 83(3) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island as follows:

83(3), it states that: "The Chair shall maintain order in Committee of the Whole House and decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the House; but disorder in a committee may only be censured by the House on receiving a report about it."

Hon. members, the rules of proceedings in Committee of the Whole House are clear. I, as your Speaker, or the House itself, are not to become involved in resolving questions of order in standing committees or in Committees of the Whole House unless there is an appeal to the House from the Committee.

An appeal from the committee must come to the House in the form of a report from the Chair on behalf of the committee and not from individual members. The only report received from the House on *An Act to Amend the Fisheries Act* (Bill No. 21) was that the committee had gone into said bill and reported that it had been agreed to without amendment.

This report was adopted by the Legislative Assembly, effectively ending Committee of the Whole House consideration of this stage of the consideration of the bill. Bill No. 21 has now advanced through first reading, second reading and Committee of the Whole House consideration.

Remaining stages are third reading, pass and Royal Assent. As you will see, one of these stages is debatable, that being the third reading. Debate at the third reading stage is to focus generally on the effects of a bill if passed.

I bring this to your attention to ensure that members are aware that all opportunity for debate on Bill No. 21 have not yet been exhausted.

I trust this will serve to sufficiently clarify the matter for members.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs.

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

I would call the hour.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hour has been called, hon. members.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors, that this House adjourn until Thursday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

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