

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Point of Order

Speaker: Hon. members, I am prepared to rule on the point of order raised by the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters at the conclusion of oral question period yesterday.

As members, we are aware a point of order is a question raised by a member who believes that the rules or customary procedures of the House have been incorrectly applied or overlooked during the proceedings. As a point of order concerns the interpretation of the rules of procedure, it's the responsibility of the Speaker to determine its merits and to resolve the issue.

While recognized as a point of order, a member should state which rule has been breached. The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters did not refer to a specific rule as having been breached. I have reviewed the rules as they are applied to the allegation by the hon. member and cannot find a specific infraction. Therefore, I do not find there is a point of order in this case.

Regarding the attempt by the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters to put a motion before the House relating to an alleged conflict of interest on the part of the Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, I have reviewed the appropriate section of the *Conflict of Interest Act* Section 28(4) as it applied to this situation. The act provides that a resolution by the Legislative Assembly may request that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner give an opinion as to whether a member has contravened the act or Prince Edward Island preliminary convention.

Hon. members, as you can appreciate, such a motion is a substantive motion and, as such, requires one clear day's notice as per the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island. I refer, hon. members, to Rule 50 which states: "...a copy of the notice has been on the desk of each member for one full sitting day before the motion may be considered by the House."

The purpose of a motion is to provide members time to prepare for the debate so that they are not called upon to consider a

motion unexpectedly. Should the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters wish the House to consider a motion to refer a matter to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner as provided for in section 28(4) of the *Conflict of Interest Act*, he must provide a written notice of motion in the required manner.

Thank you, hon. members.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of Guests (I)

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to all of our colleagues and staff and to the citizens who've joined us in the gallery. This may be the best turnout that we've seen since this General Assembly started and we welcome everyone.

I want to make a special welcome – we should really to everyone who's here – but I'll start with what I believe to be the most elderly person here, Bus Gay, a great friend and observer of public affairs and continues to make a contribution.

I want to welcome, sitting beside him, Bob Bearisto who has attended every session that he could make it to for the better part of 20 years, or perhaps more, and has missed the first few days of this session due to health. We're glad to see you doing better, Bob, and back with us in a supportive role as always. And to recognize Kenneth Murnaghan who is here, a long-time advocate for brain injury situations and issues.

I'll mention one more – as I say, we could mention everyone – Maitland MacIsaac, who's a long-time leader in education and served for a period of years as chair of the advisory board for the Order of Prince Edward Island.

Of course, to welcome everyone who joins us from home via Internet or television.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very impressed, actually, today (Indistinct) many people in the gallery. It's nice to see everybody here.

Today is actually a special day. Today marks the important milestone for Prince Edward Island and in my riding Borden-Kinkora. Today marks the 19th anniversary of the completion of the Confederation Bridge. It was on November 19th, 1996, that the last component, just before midnight, was put in place, which joined us with the rest of Canada, some people say.

In total, more than 5,000 people were employed during that construction. Our curved, 12.9 kilometre-long bridge is the longest in the world crossing ice-covered waters, and more than a decade after its construction it endures as one of Canada's top engineering achievements of the 20th century.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear! –

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everybody to the gallery, to Bus and Bob and to Kenneth Murnaghan. I'd just like to send out special birthday wishes to a friend of mine, Lynn Gallant, who turns 60 today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock and the Opposition House Leader.

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

It is wonderful to see so many join us in the gallery today and, of course, hello to everyone watching on EastLink and those who are online as well.

I would be remiss, too, if I didn't recognize some individuals. Joining us here in the gallery today, of course, Mr. Bus Gay. He's probably one of the hardest working individuals in the town of Stratford to make sure that it is and continues to be one of the very best communities to live in on PEI and the safest as well.

Also, today we have Mr. Keith MacLean and his daughter. Keith is one of the dynamic councillors on our town council over in Stratford. It's great to see you here, Keith.

Carl and Barry Nicholson, two fine gentleman from the business community. I've had the pleasure to work with them over the years on many occasions. Also travelling, representing Prince Edward Island's tourism industry and helping to recruit conferences to come to PEI. Great to see you here, gentlemen.

Of course, Kenneth Murnaghan, who I've known since we were younger gentlemen. Kenneth, as always, I'd like to thank you for all the work that you do for the Brain Injury Association of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to speak quickly about a very significant event that I attended last night, of course with yourself and the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale. It was the appreciation dinner for Camp Gencheff. It's an annual event that they do.

There was a wonderful turnout. There were representatives from various Lions clubs across Prince Edward Island, a lot of Rotarians, a lot of Rotarian clubs as well, represented, the corporate community, and the Culinary Institute of Canada, through Holland College, put the meal on last night, donated their time and the meal. I just want to shout out to the great work that Camp Gencheff does.

Last but not least, I just want to extend my condolences to some very sad news that we heard yesterday, that a great business in the town of Stratford is going to be closing its doors in the coming weeks. Home Hardware in Stratford, unfortunately, is going to be shutting its doors. Most significantly of this as well are the 60-plus staff members that will be out of work.

I wish those individuals all the best. Hopefully we can find some employment for those individuals very quickly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I, too, want to rise and welcome a lot of people from the gallery. My distant cousin Mait MacIsaac there, whose father actually served in the Legislature when it was over in the other building a few years back, for sure. Keith MacLean and his daughter from Stratford are good friends of ours. Kenny and Bus, and of course the Nicholsons who put on perhaps one of the finest lobster suppers in the province for sure. Terrific job there, of course, making use of the fine products that our fishers reap from the waters.

I do want to make a little correction to the Leader of the Opposition who noted that 19 years ago we were linked up to the rest of Canada. Nineteen years ago the rest of Canada was linked up to us. That's the way most of us here look at it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: I do want to put a big shout-out to our fishers and our farmers who are finishing up a fantastic year. We hope that everything that is in storage is in good shape. We look forward to a great year to come as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to thank the Member from Stratford-Kinlock for his kind remarks about Camp Gencheff. It was a wonderful evening last night that we attended with you.

I'd also like to welcome all our guests here today, all the usual. Bob Beirsto is here quite often, and good to see Bus Gay and Kenneth Murnaghan and Keith MacLean. He's a pretty good goalie. I can't wait to have a few shots on him this season. It's good to see Carl and Barry Nicholson here also.

Today I would like to especially welcome Flory Sanderson here in her nice, bright red scarf. She's a great supporter of mine and I'll be making a member's statement about her a little later.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everybody here today to the gallery and to the members out and watching on t.v. and Internet in Morell-Mermaid.

This is an exciting time for many of our young people in the province. This is of course the week that most parents are registering their kids for kindergarten this year. I encourage everybody out there to get your child registered.

Also, like to say hello to all the parents and teachers that are starting their parent-teacher interviews tonight and tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to acknowledge some of the people in the gallery and those watching on EastLink back home in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness.

I want to acknowledge Michelle Arsenault, a constituent of mine who is here today. Great to have her down here. Michelle has been very active in our community in the

O'Leary-Inverness area. She works with the Canadian Mental Health in Alberton providing very worthwhile services to people that require that issue. She's also been very active with Red Cross in our community as well. She's a constituent from the Duvar Road. We don't get a lot of people from the Duvar Road here. I believe Teddy Gallant used to be a Page down here at one time but he's passed on at the moment.

I also want to acknowledge Carl and Barry Nicholson. They're very active with Meetings and Conventions PEI. I had the opportunity to travel with them a little bit promoting Prince Edward Island for having people come here and have their meeting and convention here. One of the places they're always wanting to go to is the New Glasgow Lobster Suppers which I believe is one of the best traditional lobster suppers on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to welcome everyone from District 18 Rustico-Emerald who's watching from home.

Of course, everyone in the gallery here today especially Carl and Barry Nicholson, of course, constituents within Rustico-Emerald. I'd say New Glasgow is really a hot bed of entrepreneurial spirit. I know, for example, I believe Barry is involved with Dickieson's Snow Removal. I want to think of all of those folks who are really gearing up for the snow removal season. I know it's not something we look forward too, but I know they're hard at work making sure all their gear is ready.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, am very pleased to rise today and welcome everyone in the gallery. Half of them I think would be with one of the groups that I will be giving a member's statement on, a grandparents' group from Summerside-St. Eleanors. They drove all the way up here from Summerside today. I want to thank them for coming and acknowledge them. Also, hoping that they'll be able to stay a little bit later and if the day progresses as I hope, that we will be able to put a motion on the floor asking for support for this group. I want to welcome them here.

I want to welcome all those in District 22 Summerside-St. Eleanors as well that are watching from home. I'd also like to welcome Mait MacIsaac who is the best darn singer at our Rotary club in Summerside. Welcome, Mait.

I also want to wish all my cultured colleagues and friends much success today on their cultural summit that's taking place today. I'm very excited and looking forward to all the great ideas that are going to come out of that summit today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to also recognize everyone here today and welcome them. Also, especially New Glasgow Lobster Suppers, Carl and Barry. Iconic family business for a long time and great supporters of the tourism industry. There's not a function you can go to or trade show that you don't see their booth sitting there supporting it. Kudos to them and their family.

Florrie Sanderson, a small tourism operator creating economic development, really creating, carving out a niche in the tourism industry and doing a very good job of it, producing soap from goat's milk. I think that's why Bush stays so young-looking but we'll leave that.

Ken Murnaghan. Ken was instrumental in having us confirm legislation on ski helmets

at Brookvale Ski Park. Thank you for that, Ken, and we're glad to do it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira and the Opposition Whip.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I welcome everyone to the gallery too. It's great to see a full House as they see democracy work right here on Prince Edward Island.

I want to say hello to everyone in District 1. To those in District 1, there's a meeting this evening for Citizens on Patrol, better known as COP. For anyone that wants to attend outside Souris or – you might have family friends, grandmothers, fathers, whatever you want to look after inside the town. The meeting is at 7:00 p.m. at the Silver Threads Club.

The second thing I wanted to point out is I want to give a big thank you to the minister of education. The minister of education just spend \$6.1 million dollars on renovating the school in Rollo Bay for the school Ecole La Belle Cloche, the French school that's in Fortune and is going to be moved to the school in Rollo Bay. It's great to have a good working relationship with the minister of education. I had a great working relationship when he was on this side of the House and he went to that side of the House and we still have that great working relationship.

So because of that we get a \$6.1 million school. That's what the Premier wanted, everyone working together, and this is what can happen on Prince Edward Island when we do work together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to send greetings out, first of all, to my constituents of Tyne Valley-Linkletter, District 23, and thank them for their continued support in the position that I now hold and certainly the honour I have to represent them.

I'd like to also say hello to my mom, Pauline Dymont, who lives at Stewart Memorial Manor in Tyne Valley.

But also I want to send out hello to the students of Ecole Saint-Augustin in South Rustico. I visited there this morning and had a great event with them to recognize the work they did in painting our snowplow sheers. They were very excited to have the snowplow out there and look at the work that had been completed. We had time to tour the plow and get up in the seat and see where the snowplow driver sits and we had our snowplower there with us this morning, too. I just want to thank them, *merci beaucoup*, and have a great day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member for Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everyone to the gallery and a special welcome to (Indistinct) Doucette and Cynthia Poirier. I don't know if this is your first time here, but welcome.

I'd also like to send best wishes back to my District 24 and wish everyone a pleasant day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Members

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

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, on Friday the hon. Opposition House Leader asked me a question about the legal costs in regards to e-gaming file and whether they were up to date or not.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: No? I thought it was before questions.

Mr. LaVie: That's response to questions. That comes later.

Ms. Biggar: No, we're doing member statements first.

Mr. Roach: Oh, I thought he was asking for questions. Sorry, apologize, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: No problem, Mr. Minister.

Ms. Biggar: We do member statements then (Indistinct) –

Speaker: We will go back to the hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors for her member's statement.

Grandparents Support Group

Ms. Mundy: Up and down again today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today and acknowledge and recognize a group in my District 22 Summerside-St. Eleanors that is providing support, through support to seniors, who are acting as primary caregivers to their grandchildren.

As you know, many Island grandparents have taken on the primary caregiver. According to Statistics Canada, this number is increasing rapidly.

A high rate of teenage pregnancy, mental and physical illness, incarceration, or death have been factors identified in attributing to the rising number of children living with their grandparents. Raising a second generation brings many rewards, including the fulfillment of giving grandkids a sense of security and keeping the family together. However, grandparents raising grandchildren have significantly more health problems. Research has suggested that care giving grandparents are also vulnerable to a host of challenges including social isolation and poverty.

This is why grandparent support groups are so very important. This group meets once a week at Credit Union Place and is associated with the Active Living Seniors Centre. Topics discussed at these meetings include bullying, drugs, and alcohol awareness, as well as nutrition.

There are many notable people who have been raised by their grandparents, including Lucy Maud Montgomery, Adam Beach, Arctic Air, Yvonne DeCarlo, Theodore Loblaw, who is the founder of Loblaws, Hank Snow, Frank McKenna, and our own Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

It is important that we continue to support individuals who are looking after their grandchildren. I would like to encourage all my fellow members to join with me in acknowledging those individuals today. They have taken on a tremendous responsibility and are true heroes in our community.

I would also like to thank the organizers of this group for providing a crucial service to our Island seniors.

Would you all please stand so we can thank you?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Recognition of Island Hill Farm

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to take this time to recognize Island Hill Farm and its owners, Flory and Rob Sanderson, on being named one of Canada's most loved small businesses. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business hashtag SmallBiz Love contest ran from June 10th to June 22nd and invited consumers to mention their favorite small business over social media.

Island Hill Farm was featured in a national video campaign on the CFIB website to celebrate Small Business Week last month –

a must-see for all. The farm has gradually expanded from a goat farming business to a popular petting farm hosting school tours, summer camps, corporate team-building events, birthday parties, and weddings. Everyone is welcome to this hands-on scenic family farm.

The most recent development out of Island Hill Farm is soap made from goat's milk. Flory is also providing an opportunity for students at the Atlantic Veterinary College to work with the animals and gain valuable hands-on experience.

I'll leave you with a quote from Flory Sanderson on her inspiration for the farm: Find out what you're good at. Whatever you're good at, explore that. I found out I was good at goats and people so I connected those things together and went with that. Congratulations, Flory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

New Glasgow Lobster Suppers

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I rise to pay tribute to an iconic community business, the famous New Glasgow Lobster Suppers.

The New Glasgow Lobster Suppers is one of the oldest family businesses in our province, employing local residents and their children for over 57 years.

The first dinner on June 24th, 1958, was organized by the New Glasgow and District Junior Farmers Organization. Members brought in food from their homes and served it to patrons sitting on long benches at tables made from plywood doors laid flat on sawhorses.

The meal cost \$1.50 – a cold lobster, homemade rolls, potato salad, and fresh desserts, followed by a dance.

That first dinner sparked the creation of a new Island tradition of lobster suppers.

In 1972 twelve of the founding Junior Farmers purchased ownership, making it a business, not just a fundraising event. I'd like to recognize six of those founders that are still alive today: Thelma and William Nicholson, Sterling and Jean MacRae, Robert Rackham and Ralph Dickieson.

The Nicholson and MacRae families bought out the rest of the original "dirty dozen", and 2015 represents the 35th anniversary of their ownership of the facility.

The New Glasgow Lobster Suppers has seen multiple generations of workers in both management and staff with several employees whose parents and grandparents worked at the suppers.

It has also served its fair share of celebrities including hockey star Dion Phaneuf and actress Elisha Cuthbert who announced their engagement there in 2012 and are still regular patrons. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and wife Margaret visited, along with Premier Alex Campbell, in 1974 to cut the ribbon at a "grand re-opening." Perhaps someday their son, our new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, will visit the New Glasgow Lobster Suppers with his children.

The New Glasgow Lobster Suppers have been the hub for community events in New Glasgow for many years, offering its facilities free for events like the Women's Institute "meet your neighbor night," the Gulf Shore Consolidated School "spaghetti spooktacular" fundraiser, fund-raising fashion shows, and many others.

From the beginning the New Glasgow Lobster Suppers has prioritized buying local and serving Island products. They are very proud to be part of the "Taste of New Glasgow" event which has put New Glasgow on the map as a culinary Mecca.

We look forward to the continued success of the New Glasgow Lobster Suppers for many generations to come, and thank them for their contributions to the Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

PEI Food Exchange

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to pay tribute to the PEI Food Exchange, a grassroots group committed to increasing food security on Prince Edward Island through gleaning, through growing food, and through education.

In 2013 the Report on Household Food Security in Canada concluded that PEI had the second-highest rate of food insecurity amongst children in Canada, second only to Nunavut, and that the severity of food insecurity on PEI is actually rising. This was the impetus for a small group of committed people to come together and to take action.

One initiative of the PEI Food Exchange is to collect unsold produce from the Charlottetown Farmers' Market which is then delivered to families who cannot otherwise afford healthy food. The PEI Food Exchange also hosts food and garden skills workshops to encourage people to grow some of their own food and to share knowledge about preparing and preserving locally available produce.

The main initiative of the food exchange is gleaning, a renewal of an ancient tradition of harvesting non-commercial crops from local farms. In 2015, 200 gleaners harvested 10,000 pounds of produce. The people who help with the harvest can keep up to one-third of the harvest, one-third goes to the farmer, and the last third is delivered to service agencies such as Salvation Army and The Upper Room. This is a dignified way for people to secure some of their own food while helping others.

This small group is building community, reducing waste, providing meaningful work, improving diets, aiding farmers, reducing food insecurity, and supporting volunteer agencies across Prince Edward Island. That's an extraordinary variety of positive outcomes from one small initiative.

I salute, in particular, Pauline Howard and Cindy Richards for their dedicated work to this initiative, and we can all support their work by attending the second annual Step Up to the Plate dinner on December 3rd at the Farm Centre.

Members and people with us today, I'd just like you to recognize that Pauline is with us in the gallery today in the far corner. Thank you, Pauline.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

E-gaming legal costs (further)

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On Friday the hon. Opposition House Leader asked about legal costs, the up-to-date-costs, in regards to the e-gaming file. I checked with my department and they advise me that the bill is currently \$118,000. At the end of this process I will update the House on the final total.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

School water system safety (further)

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday during Question Period a question was asked on water testing in schools. School water is tested four times a year for bacteria for those schools that use well water. For those schools that are on municipal water the municipality ensures the quality of the water. The school board reports that there's an average of two water quality issues each year.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On Tuesday, when we were in Committee of the Whole House to consider *An Act to Amend the Sheriffs Act* –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) respond. I'm sorry (Indistinct).

Premier: (Indistinct).

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Whistleblower legislation

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the Premier. Whistleblower legislation is a tool used widely to ensure transparency and accountability by giving public servants the safety (Indistinct) identify wrongdoing.

Mr. Premier, you announced plans for a whistleblower policy. Did you give any consideration to whistleblower legislation instead?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, yes we did, and this was part of our platform in the course of the election campaign .

Apparently it suited the voters that we would bring in whistleblower provisions and protections through a policy that has been developed and implemented and with which we're working with the public service to make it effective.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the Premier: Why did you decide not to introduce whistleblower legislation and instead go with the a policy?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the initiative to bring in whistleblower protection is part of a larger program that our government has of openness and transparency and good government.

It's our view that by bringing it in as policy it's an opportunity to work with the workers

and with the units and with the bargaining units or unions in the public service, and that's exactly what we're doing and what we have done in bringing forward this policy.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Mr. Premier, why do you think the policy offers more protection to employees than legislation?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the policy offers the same protection to the employees as legislation.

By bringing it in as policy it's something that you can work with the employees in its development and its implementation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Premier, is there something about giving employees protection through legislation that you object to?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, of course I'm not objecting to legislation or I wouldn't be sitting here in this Legislature.

There are really three levels at which you can implement the kind of changes that we're talking about. You could bring in legislation, it could be done through regulation or it could be done through a policy. Our view is that a policy was the effective way to bring it forward in a timely fashion and then to work with the public service, with whom we work very closely on all matters, to make it effective and to value their work. That was exactly why we brought this in and we're proud of it and it's in place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

History has shown that even the best mentioned policies, intended policies, are sometimes ignored in practice. That's less the case with legislation. Don't you think that a whistleblower law would be a better way to go?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that we believe that a policy is the appropriate way to proceed and what we laid out in our platform and what we've implemented, and I'm proud to say that it's at work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Ethics commissioner

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Under the Premier's plan an employee can forward a complaint ultimately to the provincial ethics commissioner. Premier, who does that commissioner report to?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the commissioner of ethics reports to the Premier and I'd be happy to table her report here in the Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Premier, have you discussed this policy with the ethics commissioner?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have, and I've discussed it with other officials and folks who are bringing this into action in the public service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the Premier: Is that ethics commissioner position an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the ethics commissioner is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The person that we've appointed is a long-serving senior public servant, a former deputy attorney general, former deputy in several other departments, and someone who is regarded with the highest integrity by the government and by all of her colleagues in the public service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct) confused there with that answer. I'll ask it again.

Is the ethics commissioner independent of the Legislative Assembly?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'm not sure exactly what is meant by "independent of the Legislative Assembly." The ethics commissioner, Shauna Sullivan-Curley, a name that's well known and respected, is appointed by Lieutenant Governor in Council and her work is going to be the subject of a report on a regular basis, and we'd be happy to make that available to the Legislature.

So I don't think, if I can interpret the question properly, that we had in any sense intended for her to be independent of the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Under your proposed policy, Mr. Premier, what powers will be awarded to the ethics commissioner when dealing with these complaints?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, it's not a proposed policy, the policy has been adopted and it's in place.

The powers of the ethics commissioner are, in the first instance, to work with employees who bring complaints forward, which is a very important part of her role, or the role of that office, to work with the deputies and the senior leaders in the public service to be sure that the policy, and other policies regarding ethics and integrity as attached to her office, are being developed and implemented and made effective throughout the public service, and then to receive complaints where they come forward and then, if necessary, to bring them forward to me as Premier.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask one more question, I guess. I sort of question if we put the policies in place, we give it to the ethics commissioner, why would she answer to the Premier?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I, as Premier, am politically responsible for the leadership of the public service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Auditor General access to sealed documents

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

First and foremost, I'd like to thank the finance minister for bringing us back some

information with regards to the cost so far incurred by the court case with regards to the \$25 million lawsuit against this government, but I would like to remind the minister that it was actually the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque that asked the question and not the Opposition House Leader.

My first question is actually for the Premier. Premier, you witnessed here yesterday where I attempted to find out answers for Islanders that are very concerned over this situation that has occurred under your government's watch to the tune of where we're at now with the \$25 million lawsuit against your government. Unfortunately, there were no answers forthcoming, Mr. Premier. However, you have campaigned, you have spoken, it has been your voice – talked about transparency, openness and doing things differently.

Mr. Premier: Will you assure Islanders that the Auditor General will have full access to the documents that your government sealed through the securities commission regarding the e-gaming scandal?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General, it's my understanding – I'm not directly involved – that the Auditor General has been in touch with officials throughout government and has been gaining the cooperation and full openness and cooperation from all of our officials.

On the particular question I cannot say with absolutely certainty, because of the way the question was asked, whether there may be other privacy issues that concern the ability of those officials to disclose the documents that may be asked for.

Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Premier's letter to Auditor General

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

Previously the Premier was asked to table a copy of the letter that went to the Auditor General asking for the scope of the audit that he had requested of the Auditor General.

The Premier came back and said, basically: You can find that information on the Order of Council which we did and went to. It was very vague, so again, what we're asking for is openness, transparency.

Premier: Will you table the letter that you sent to the Auditor General requesting the audit and the scope of the audit?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation whatsoever in tabling the letter.

I'm sure it will say the same thing as is said in the Order in Council that set out the request to the Auditor General, which is the proper way that it's done. But in any event, if it will help anybody to see that the communication with the Auditor General was the same as is in the Order in Council, which is a public document, then of course I'll be happy to table the document, the letter.

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

School system improvement re: dissolution of school board

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question to the minister of education. Minister, you claim collaboration to be the cornerstone moving forward and you've risen in this House a number of times and said you would work with all stakeholders. You're the same minister who cut teachers here last spring so Islanders obviously can't trust you.

Question. The government made a commitment to more public engagement in education, but all they've seen is an announcement that does away with an elected school board. How does this improve the school system for Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The changes in the education system will now ensure that all of our resources are focused on learner excellence.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier made sure that there were two other ministers and himself attended the education announcement, and the minister promised Islanders that he would do the right thing for the children.

Question to the minister: When will we hear from you on the details of your plan on education and these new changes?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now, instead of the department and the school board and principals and teachers working separately to help Island students, we'll all work together to help Island students. As we move forward with our new advisory councils, everyone works in a very collaborative and engaging effort to focus on learner achievement.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's pretty shy on details, and of course all Islanders want to know what the details are on this and they're waiting quite patiently for it. Based on the minister's answers yesterday and so far today he doesn't seem like he's up to speed with what's going on in his own department. The minister said he'd look at holding public meetings with the sole trustee during transition.

Transition group public meetings

Question to the minister: Can the minister confirm today that teachers, communities, and parents will have an opportunity to be

consulted and consult with this new transition group and that public meetings will be held on it?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As our new education system moves forward, teachers, parents, communities, and the students will all be engaged in the process with the advisory councils from several different levels.

Thank you.

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

School system improvement re: advisory councils

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister seems unable to explain anything at all when it comes to his new changes.

Can the minister explain how the new advisory councils work? Isn't it just a little bit more window dressing? What will improve in the education system because of these new councils?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The education system will now be moving forward with collaboration from all stakeholders to ensure that student achievement is our number one focus. Our focus is on the learner and we will have input from all stakeholders.

Thank you.

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

EELC minister and education changes

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is the minister that was responsible for teacher cuts back in June, and a wrong decision that he eventually had to overturn.

Question to the minister: How can we expect you not to overturn these new announced changes in education? Why should Islanders trust you to make the right decision for them?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As minister of education, I take the education of our Island students very seriously. We as a government take the education very seriously and make it a priority. Therefore we're creating these new councils to engage the community, to include all stakeholders and to listen to all stakeholders as we shape the future of the education system on PEI, focused on our learners.

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

Advisory councils and school closures

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We know that's (Indistinct) long since your plan over there to close schools on Prince Edward Island and the minister seems to be talking about these advisory councils and how they're going to save his bacon every day.

If your new advisory council advises you that no schools should be closed on Prince Edward Island, will you commit today that you'll listen to them or will you fire them too?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What I will commit to is working with all stakeholders from all levels, all advisory councils, and to listen to these advisory councils. We will shape our education system to better enhance learner achievement on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

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

Classroom caps

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister has failed students and teachers in this province time and time again. Teachers have been pushing to have their voices heard for quite some time.

Question to the minister: Now that you are in charge of education as per your announcement the other day, will you listen to teachers and commit to hard caps in classrooms that teachers have been pleading for for so long?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Absolutely.

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

Classroom staff reductions moratorium

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Classrooms are bursting at the seams. Teachers, EAs, support staff, are always on the chopping block. You cut teachers last June, and EAs. Parents have legitimate concerns over the number of teachers and EAs that are in the classrooms.

Question to the minister: Now that you're responsible for education as per your announcement the other day, will you commit to a moratorium on any staff reductions in Island classrooms?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member from Georgetown-St. Peters said that we cut EAs this year. We did not do that. In fact, we put eight new full-time equivalents back into the school system to focus on students and the front line.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously EAs came out of the classrooms in Cardigan, and I know full well that they did, so that's a cut.

School system improvement re: advisory councils

This minister's newly minted advisory councils have no mandate and they have no legislative protection. They are at the whim of the Premier. Islanders want more action. How do we know that these aren't just window dressing?

Question to the minister: How will these new councils improve education? Will your new advisory committees' recommendations be binding or will you simply listen to the things that suit your own interests?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We're a government that believes in transparency. We believe in collaboration and engagement. That's exactly what we're doing, going forward with our new education plan for Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

EELC minister and confidence

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier made good and sure that he had two other ministers and himself attend the announcement. One was just the emcee but it was very clear that day that the Premier had lost confidence in you as minister and he brought other strengths along.

Minister, isn't it true that everyone in Prince Edward Island has lost confidence in your ability to lead education here in Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wouldn't be here today if I didn't believe there was a better tomorrow for our Island learners. I will do everything I possibly can to engage our frontline workers, to engage our stakeholders, to do what we can for student achievement. Our focus, and our one and only focus, is on learners and their student achievement.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Psychiatrist's salary and audit

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I want to start by thanking the Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services for promptly reporting back to the House on the matter of the \$1.13 million payment to an Island psychiatrist.

I was shocked to read in that report that there is no formalized auditing process in place within the department so in the meantime we have to work with the existing process. The minister's response stated that: During periodic reviews of physician billing, and I quote: any irregularities discovered may trigger an audit.

A question to the minister. Could the minister give the House the average amount that psychiatrists charge under the fee for service in Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

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

I don't know the exact numbers but I want to be clear. I'm not sure if all the information did get in the note, but there are annual audit work plans that are designed by Health PEI under the *Health Services Act*. If you go back to the Auditor General's report back in 2009 there were clear recommendations on physician billing.

Currently we have a claims billing system that is tied in very directly to the Master Agreement which is a negotiated contract. I would like to reassure the Leader of the Third Party that audits are ongoing and they're based on a range of activity. Audit work plans are identified, but also if we identify billing practices that we see variances in billing payments, we certainly have the ability to go in and start audits.

I do want to reiterate that these are ongoing and the work plans are built and they evolve through the course of the year.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party, first supplementary.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

All of the information that you just stated, minister, was not in that note. I would like to know from the minister: Can you confirm whether or not this particular psychiatrist billing did indeed trigger an audit?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

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

One of our priorities in government, as the minister of health who oversees the *Health Services Act*, is to make sure that we get good value for every dollar we have in our over \$600 million health care budget.

I do want to confirm that there is an audit that has been going on on psychiatry. That is part of the audit work plan and that is ongoing. We'll continue to allow that work to go on and we'll allow Health PEI to sort of evaluate that audit and also to look at recovery practices, if necessary.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party for your second supplementary.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm still not clear whether the audit is on psychiatry or on this particular psychiatrist.

Could the minister please tell the House how long these audits typically take, who is doing it, and when the results will be made available to the public?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

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

I will bring that information back. It is on a group of psychiatrists. This particular psychiatrist that has been referred to by the Leader of the Third Party has a very full practice. He's a fee for service. I do want to reiterate that fee for service physicians in the province are responsible for payment of all their staff, all their operational costs, which is part of their responsibility. We do have a Master Agreement that's negotiated in good faith. We're currently in Master Agreement negotiations. But I'll bring all of that information back to the Leader of the Third Party for his clarification.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Personal tax exemption

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question today is to the Minister of Finance, but in asking him the question, I just need to allude to a statement made by the minister of agriculture this week.

He said: A balanced budget is important because it will give government the capacity to explore new alternatives. One alternative I have heard over and over is: Once this government reaches a balanced budget, could it increase the basic personal tax exemption?

Mr. Minister, would you be exploring an increase in this exemption once fiscal balance has been reached?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The quick answer to that question is yes. Once we reach a fiscal balance it's our government's position that we will do a broad view of tax in the province.

Mr. LaVie: When?

Mr. Aylward: This'll never happen.

Mr. Roach: I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that we've made some moves toward that already.

In the past spring and summer –

Some Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: – Legislature we brought in reductions with respect to the low-income tax reduction. That put savings to those people that it affected in excess of \$1.7 million.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Supplementary question to the same minister.

I'm sure there are many ways for the government, once they reach balance, to leave money in more pockets of Islanders. This is one way.

Could the minister tell us if there are other alternatives under consideration? I know this is early, but is there anything we could expect once the books are balanced?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. LaVie: Who wrote that, the minister of workforce?

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, there are a number of different ways. I know that it may seem early but we're preparing for budget for 2016 and I know that my staff is considering all of those avenues as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

O'Leary early years centres

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Early Childhood.

The PEI government has invested in establishing early years centres on PEI to better prepare children entering the kindergarten and, eventually, the provincial schools system. Early years centres are an integral part of communities with working parents and promoting certifiable curriculum to our young children in their formative years.

I notice on the government website there are 47 early year centres registered on PEI, but yet none between Tignish and Tyne Valley. With the recent closure of KinderStart Early Years Centre in Bloomfield, this is leaving a huge void for working parents in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness with limited access to affordable child care.

Will the minister be calling for proposals in the near future for a government-supported early years centre in the O'Leary area?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, we will be putting out a call for interest in the very near future for anyone that's interested in that particular region for licensing. There are regulations in place where to become an early years' centre they have to be a licensed facility for six months prior to that. We do have two in the area that are applying at this time for licensing, one for daycare and the other for full day child care.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, your first supplementary question.

Mr. Henderson: Thanks, Minister.

Would the minister consider more than one early years centre designation for the region as in Bloomfield, where the previous one was, it's quite a long drive from West Point to Bloomfield, it's a lot drive from Portage to Bloomfield, Haliburton to Bloomfield. So would he consider – with 47 across the Island, would he consider two in the O'Leary area?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, it's the child care facilities board that considers licensing for these establishments and it's based on a needs basis per region, but I'm certain if there's a need and there's a need for two, they will be certainly more than open to looking into it.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, your second supplementary question.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously the one that is a private operation in the O'Leary area is the Mother Goose daycare. What is the criteria for an early years centre that would be supported by government so we can understand the full complexity of what it takes to qualify?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned earlier, a licensed child care centre must be in operation for a minimum of six months before being able to make application to the child care facilities board.

Thank you.

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

Atlantic Gateway and TIE minister

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Atlantic Gateway and Trade Corridor Strategy, a partnership between the

Government of Canada and the four Atlantic Provinces, was released March 23rd, 2011. This government has a signatory to the Atlantic Gateway Strategy.

Question to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: Minister, what are your priorities under the Atlantic Gateway?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, we have had some meetings, actually, on that particular area. We're looking at making sure that our roads for transportation are there for our exporting industries. The ferry is also another priority for us. In my discussions, actually, with the new Minister of Transport at the federal level I raised those particular two issues with him.

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

Wood Islands ferry and government support

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Atlantic Gateway is an integral part of Canada's national system of corridors and gateways. Improving our reliable and secure transportation network, which this province is touting as part of our Food Island strategy, we do need to have a great infrastructure in place. A vital component of our transportation network is the Wood Islands ferry. The service was up over 30% in the month of September alone as per this government's own statistics.

Why, then, has this government failed to invest in or support the Wood Islands ferry and surrounding infrastructure?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, I'm not sure if you're aware, but the responsibility for infrastructure and upgrades to ferries is a federal responsibility.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm well aware of that the ferry is a federal issue and I'm looking forward to working with our MP for the riding, Mr. MacAulay.

This government has divested, not invested, in the ferry infrastructure around the Wood Islands hub since this government came into office. Just last month the minister closed the permanent scale house to our ferry complex –

Mr. LaVie: Shame, shame!

Ms. Compton: – to the detriment to the industry, to all truckers in our area. Does the minister support investing provincial dollars from her budgets into maintaining and perhaps enhancing our ferry service?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)!

Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just in response to the scale house itself, we actually have extended services on the roads in eastern PEI by putting two of the employees out on the road and increasing inspections of heavy trucks that are on the road. We still maintain that service as well for the trucking business that is going across the Wood Islands ferry.

We repurposed the scale that was there into the existing new facility and we have a portable scale that goes across eastern PEI, as you may have seen. I do know from speaking with the employees they're quite happy with their new role. I would congratulate them on the excellent work that they're doing and I'd be happy to continue that discussion with the hon. member. If she has any further questions I'll get that back to her.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the conversation you had with the employees is maybe different than what I had. This is a collaborative government, and that's what they tout. You might want to speak to the truckers from the area and ask them how they feel about it.

Long-term ferry contract

Minister, will you take a leadership role and spearhead a joint investment by the provincial and federal governments towards a secure and long-term contract with the ferry?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Absolutely, that's one of my priorities.

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

Gateways and Border Crossing fund

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Transport Canada has a specific program named the Gateways and Border Crossing fund. This \$2.1 billion dollar fund is focused on strategic trade corridors linking to international gateways. The activities under the Gateways and Border Crossing's fund build on the Atlantic Gateway initiative.

Minister, are you aware of the federal funding under this program?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, I don't have those details with me today but I'll be certainly happy to get some more information on that.

Mr. Myers: Bring her up to speed. You bring her up to speed. (Indistinct).

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Gateways and Border Crossing fund – which I have a copy here, I'd be happy to table it and you can look at it at your leisure – that dates back to the early years of this government and dates back and runs until March 31st, 2018. The Atlantic Gateways portion of this fund is \$2.2 million dollars.

I recognize the potential for Wood Islands' gateway hub under the funding of this program, and I would hope the minister does too.

Minister, will you guarantee provincial support for an application under the Gateways and Border Crossings fund?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, in conjunction with my other partners across Atlantic Canada and the other ministers, we certainly work together on that particular project and we'll continue to work together. Whatever we can get for Prince Edward Island is important as well.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, minister. I look forward to that collaboration because this government's record in District 4 is less than stellar and less than satisfactory. I think that Wood Islands is a gateway to this province. It's something that all Islanders should be concerned about. I know the residents in eastern PEI are.

Minister, will the province immediately undertake work to submit an application for the Wood Islands gateway under this federal fund?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I noted, hon. member, we are in discussions with the new transport minister on the importance of the ferry. With our new MP and Cabinet minister, the hon. Lawrence MacAulay, we will continue to work in partnership. It is a very key link to our province and we want to engage and ensure and secure that service on a long-term basis. We'll be working to look at extending the agreement that's in place. It ends in March 2016. We believe there should be a long-term agreement and we'll be working towards that.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, I'll ask the question again: Will the province immediately undertake work to submit an application on behalf of Wood Islands and the Wood Islands gateway under this federal fund?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hon. member, we will continue to work on projects that we can partner with on the federal government under the new program. I'm sure we'll continue to explore those options.

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

Ms. Compton: I'll ask the question again.

Mr. Aylward: Ask it slower this time.

Ms. Compton: Will you please commit to applying for funding for the Wood Islands hub under this federal program immediately?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. member, any funding that we can get for the Wood Island ferries we will ensure that we get it.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Environmental Advisory Council report

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment. At the water act consultations the Environmental Advisory Council has been gathering a lot of information and they're going to deliver a report. At one of the meetings the question came up as to whether that report will be made available to the public.

Will the minister commit that the entire report in an unabridged format will be available for the general public to review?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Appreciate the opportunity to bring a little more clarity to that if it hasn't already been made clear at those meetings.

We are currently eight meetings over our consultations across Prince Edward Island, four more to go. I've tried to make it clear at the meetings that once the Environmental Advisory Council has put together what they would consider would look like a draft act, we will take that again and go out all across Prince Edward Island in another round of public consultation meetings.

At that time, myself will be at the table, as well as members of my staff, to present it to the public and to say: Does this respect the message that you brought forward earlier in the consultations and is it exactly what you would like to see going forward?

There will be a full Island-wide consultation program again for that, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, final question.

Mr. Trivers: At these meetings for the water act consultations the question has been asked more than once of the EAC, the Environmental Advisory Council, what their deliverable is out of this, and they have said consistently they are going to prepare a report that contains all their findings. They have said they are not targeting the

preparation of a draft water act in any way, shape or form.

Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, can you confirm exactly what the deliverable is from the EAC themselves, who have been the council that has been hearing all the water act questions?

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, the Environmental Advisory Council has been at the table and they're doing a tremendous job listening to Islanders from all across the Island. They are accepting the input. They're documenting it, they're putting it together, they're openly discussing it between themselves, and they will be a big, integral part of forming the new draft act as we go forward. That's where that information will be brought forward out to all the public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: End of Question Period.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

HUB Model

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, in March of 2015 a jury of Islanders participated in an inquest into the death of four-year-old Nash Campbell and his mother Patricia Hennessey in June of 2013.

Prince Edward Island has a rich fabric of Islanders supporting each other during difficult times. This is a tragic and unfortunate event that has impacted the whole province, and one that we hope will not happen again on Prince Edward Island.

The jury made 15 recommendations that focus on greater information sharing and collaboration when working with high-risk, high-conflict families. We must break down barriers and ensure the focus of all partners is on the best interests of the child.

As Attorney General I received the recommendations and referred them to a committee of four deputy ministers for review and action. As a result, a cross-departmental working group representing Health, Family and Human Services, Justice and Public Safety, and Education was established to develop and implement a new model of services to help high-conflict families with high levels of risk.

The HUB model provides immediate, coordinated and integrated responses by mobilizing resources to address those situations facing individuals, children, and families with acutely elevated risk factors.

The HUB is widely recognized as an innovation in Canadian community safety models and we are confident it will work especially well in Prince Edward Island as it is well suited to our circumstances and context.

In addition to moving to a HUB model, we have assessed the key needs that the jury's specific recommendations were assigned to address and we are immediately moving to:

(1) develop a community-based service to provide a safe and supervised access service for children moving between parents, as well as parenting coordination service for high-risk families in transition;

(2) arrange for international domestic-violence expert Dr. Peter Jaffe to conduct an interagency training on filicide risk and associated matters;

(3) have the Office of the Chief Health Officer develop a meaningful and regular reporting system on the health and well-being of Prince Edward Island children, including the impacts of the risk factors and progress on strengthening protective factors;

(4) expand the capacity of the Family Law Program to provide legal and/or clinical intervention for children and families in high-risk family litigation cases.

I'd like to emphasize that these are actions that are being taken right now to protect vulnerable children who are involved in high-risk families. We believe this collaborative approach is better suited to our Prince Edward Island context and will

provide more immediate benefits than would come through the creation of a new office of Child and Youth Advocate. These immediate steps will strengthen collaborative action, deepen professional knowledge, and expand child and family-centred Family Law services. Further, there will be the authority of the Chief Health Officer to report on progress or identify systemic concerns.

We will continue our work on the remaining recommendations and provide a further update during the spring sitting of this House.

It is sometimes said that only a monumental tragedy can bring about monumental change. I am confident that these initiatives represent monumental change for social justice.

Nash Campbell has inspired a deep motivation for change and his legacy will be found in the significant steps to a safer community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

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

This announcement by the Premier certainly is very timely, although albeit perhaps late. The recommendations by this jury came forward on June 15th. We did have an announcement at that time, the introduction of the recommendations, to which I spoke at length here in the House on June 16th.

I felt then and I still feel very strongly that recommendation No. 15 from this jury is essential, and it does call for the provincial position for a child advocate to be put in place. We know very well that here on Prince Edward Island we're one of the few jurisdictions in all of Canada that does not have a child advocate and I find that shocking.

We happen to have a group of grandparents here in the Legislative Assembly with us today, and I know that the hon. member

beside me here is going to have a very important motion that she is bringing forward in a short amount of time. But I have been hearing from grandparents ever since I was elected back in 2011 and there are many concerns as well, particularly from not only the parents that are having issues domestically between themselves trying to make things right for their children, but also the grandparents who were very loud advocates for these innocent children.

I have one situation right now where, actually, I am very much engaged with the minister's deputy minister in family services, Teresa Hennebery, and her and her staff are doing tremendous work, but again, I strongly feel that we do need a child advocate here on Prince Edward Island.

Now the HUB model that the Premier is talking about today, I'll admit here on my feet that I don't know a lot about it, but I will be doing my own research on it to see what it looks like. I hope that it will fill some of the gaps that are currently lacking here in Prince Edward Island because, at the end of the day, we simply cannot afford to get it wrong. There are innocent lives at stake here and it's incumbent upon us to make sure that the most vulnerable here in PEI are protected.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

One can only hope when tragedy such as this occurs that in time something positive will come out of this. I have to say that this new holistic, coordinated approach across departments is just such a positive move and I hope that – because we all know that when things like this happen it's not the result of one small thing, it's an economic, it's a social, it's a medical problem all rolled into one, and it's complicated. When you have complex problems we need to involve everybody in solving that. I only hope that we can apply this to other complex situations such as mental health and addictions.

I would also like to echo what the hon. member said, that I don't believe that this HUB approach is a substitution for having a child advocate. I don't think it's an either/or situation. I think we should have both. I hope the government looks at that again on the 15th recommendation of the board to say: You know what? We are out of step with the rest of Canada and we do need a child advocate in here as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

ASME AIA Accreditation

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, Island businesses and the provincial economy will benefit from a new accreditation achieved by the Inspection Services branch of our provincial environment division.

Inspection Services have received accreditation as an American Society of Mechanical Engineers Authorized Inspection Agency for boilers and pressure vessels.

This internationally-recognized accreditation means that we can now provide inspection and certification services here on PEI for Island companies. This will allow Island businesses to increase their productivity, reduce inspection costs and expand their international export market.

Accredited Authorized Inspection Agencies are responsible for performing inspections of ASME pressure certificate holders during the manufacturing process. Currently, there are only 31 ASME Authorized Inspection Agencies worldwide.

Prior to this fall, Island business had to hire off-Island inspectors at a high cost with lengthy wait times. It will now cost businesses only about 20% of what they used to pay with no wait times delaying their production and exportation.

Island businesses are pleased with government's commitment to growing the private sector. Representatives from Charlottetown Metal Products and

Diversified Metal Engineering are here in the House with us today to celebrate this achievement. They have told us this local accreditation is a significant milestone for their companies that will make them more competitive when bidding on work requiring this certification.

In closing, I want to commend my staff who spent about a year and a half undergoing training to achieve this accreditation. We are always proud to invest in our private sector here on Prince Edward Island.

With us in the House today I would like to acknowledge Mark Steele from Diversified Metal Engineering and Wayne Simmons from Charlottetown Metal Products, as well as Glenda MacKinnon-Peters and Steven Townsend from our inspection services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a great statement and it's a great announcement. It's a step forward in the right direction for Island businesses that are trying to ship these pressure vessels and that need the inspections to get to places off-Island.

I think this is the sort of move that we would like to see the government take in other areas as well to support entrepreneurs. I would like to see this sort of forward thinking fall over into the other ways that the government does business and plans for the future. The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, I mean, on their website, for example, they talk and they say: A man with a new idea is a crank until he succeeds. It's a Mark Twain quote. I think this government really has to look at being forward thinking, being open to new ideas, especially on the renewable energy side of things.

Again, this is a great announcement. It's great to see that training is coming to our public servants to do this on the Island and it's great to see this government supporting

entrepreneurs. I hope we see more of this in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

Response to PEI Homelessness Report

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

Earlier this week the PEI Community Advisory Board on Homelessness released the 2015 PEI Report on Homelessness. This is timely because this Sunday, November 22nd, is National Housing Day.

I would like to recognize a few of the members from the advisory board who are with us in the gallery today. From the PEI Community Advisory Board on Homelessness, Ellen Ridgeway, Janis MacLellan-Peters, and Bev Thompson. Roma Arsenault Homelessness Partnering Strategy Coordinator. Michael Kenny from My Place Housing Program. Michelle Arsenault, Gina Clow, and Lisa MacLean with the Housing First Program.

The report recognizes many of the important steps that government has already taken to help those in need it most, including the increases to the number of rent supplement units provided the province.

Since 2013 we have invested in housing through 60 new rent supplements; 50 of those have helped Island families and the other 10 have been designated for individuals who are struggling with mental health challenges.

The report also noted that Prince Edward Island is now the only province in Canada that provides a tip-to-tip response to homelessness.

The report raises concerns about expiring federal agreements, long wait lists, and the need for a provincial housing strategy. In that regard, I am pleased to announce that my department is currently in the initial stages of developing a new strategy for housing on Prince Edward Island. The new

strategy that will align housing supply with present and future needs for Islanders.

I am also encouraged by the commitment of the new federal government to affordable and social housing.

The housing strategy will help support the goals of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy and the new mental health and addictions strategy.

We are committed to maintaining the ongoing work with our federal and community partners to continue to build on the progress that has been made.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a great announcement here today. Any time that we can help some of the most vulnerable in our community, particularly around housing issues and affordable housing issues, is a great step forward.

I look to my own community, Stratford-Kinlock, and I think of two buildings in particular that serve a great service, in particular to our seniors in our community, because while we do talk about homelessness and poverty, quite often we forget about our seniors that are coping and struggling with having to pay their everyday bills, medications, and things like that, when they're trying to survive on a very low fixed income. I look at the facility that we have on Mutch Drive that is operated by the town of Stratford, and also St. John House. Both of these facilities I visit regularly. It provides a wonderful setting, a beautiful setting, and a wonderful home for many seniors.

Of course, when we start to talk about mental health and addictions it's certainly one of the areas that I'm very concerned with here on PEI. Anything that we can do to move this forward and to protect, once again, Islanders that are in need of affordable housing, and safe housing, it is a great thing.

I applaud the minister's statement today and I look forward to further advancements on this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, welcome this announcement today. Homelessness is a tragedy for the individuals involved, of course, but it's also a failure of a caring and decent society.

Here in Prince Edward Island we're lucky that we have relatively low homelessness rates, but that doesn't – one person without a home on Prince Edward Island is not acceptable, as far as I'm concerned.

I'd like to bring up in the House an idea which was discussed by all party leaders in the election. That's the idea of a guaranteed livable income, something that was supported, at least in theory, as a potential solution to poverty and of course the main reason for homelessness. All four leaders expressed their support for this idea. We know that a guaranteed livable income would reduce health costs, it will reduce justice costs, and it will reduce our social costs. But more than that, it's just the decent thing to do.

I would encourage the minister to try and establish discussions with our federal cousins on using Prince Edward Island as potentially a pilot project for a guaranteed livable income. I think we're the perfect place for doing that and we already have community groups who are pushing for this on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table written questions to the Minister of Transportation, Communities, Lands and Environment, and Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, that the said documents be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the document Atlantic Gateway International Marketing Program Description and Applicant Guide and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table Responses to Questions that were asked during Committee of the Whole under *An Act to Amend the Sheriffs Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No. 2)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister Agriculture and Fisheries that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Bill No. 44, *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act (No. 2)* read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

A brief explanation, hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

Mr. Currie: Just a few notes, some housekeeping items.

It provides the Lieutenant Governor in Council with authority under subsection 96 of the act to make regulations, prescribing requirements a member has to meet in order to be authorized to form a reserved activity, such as expanded scope activities in a range of professions.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Orders Other Than Government

Speaker: Okay. Now, go ahead. We're keen

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to notice given, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act To Amend the Pesticides Control Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Committee Clerk: Bill No. 100, *An Act to Amend the Pesticides Control Act*, read a first time.

Speaker: Could you give me a brief explanation, hon. Leader of the Opposition?

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This bill will clarify the circumstances in which an inspector can enter upon and inspect land, premises, vehicles, and equipment. This bill will authorize an inspector to proceed only if the inspector has reasonable and probable grounds to believe a person has contravened or is contravening an act and its regulations.

I feel this amendment is a fair amendment and will provide a clear and more collaborative approach to enhance environmental stewardship while not only protecting the officer but it will also protect the public at large.

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Motions Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

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

At this time the opposition would like to call Motion 56 to the floor, Protecting food safety in the Prince Edward Island potato industry.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Motion No. 56.

Moved by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, seconded by the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, the following motion.

WHEREAS the potato industry is one of the largest economic generators on Prince Edward Island;

AND WHEREAS the seed potato industry is a key component of the potato industry;

AND WHEREAS the province and the potato industry have worked together to develop an effective system of controls against plant disease;

AND WHEREAS the province has announced plans to discontinue potato

disinfection services effective December 31, 2015;

AND WHEREAS the current system of potato disinfection services has served to enhance the market position of Island potato exports;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge the province to temporarily pause its decision to end potato disinfection services to allow for more time for a collaborative solution to be developed between the province, the potato industry and other possible partners that preserves this vital support against plant health disease.

Speaker: I will ask the mover of the motion to please speak to the motion.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am proud to rise in this House today and once again offer my support to our \$1 billion industry, the potato, through our motion today.

I am disappointed that I even have to address this decision by this government to discontinue potato disinfection services because I see it as yet another blow to our industry which is the backbone of economic development and growth in this province.

It was only two years ago today that our potato industry was blindsided by the closure of the \$37 million McCain facility which saw 121 Islanders lose their jobs and 23 growers lose their contracts worth over \$7 million to the Island economy. It was devastating to those workers and the growers and also their families. It hurt the economy of our local communities whose businesses were impacted. Many are still trying to recover.

At the time, it was felt that things couldn't get much worse, but it wasn't long after that when needles began showing up in our potatoes and bioterrorists began trying to destroy the reputation of our Island potato products through food tampering.

Our proud potato growers were discouraged, but they rallied and responded by purchasing millions of dollars worth of metal detection

equipment aimed at ensuring our product is safe and that the reputation of our Island potato products, as being the best in the world, was not tarnished.

Our industry has been plagued by wireworm and very extreme rain conditions, situations way beyond our control, in the past. In August of this year the industry learned that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries intended to implement a 200% increase in the fees for disinfection services. That was a major shock. There was no consultation. The decision to discontinue disinfection services altogether in our province came as another blow and caused our industry to be fearful once again.

They fear, as does our caucus, that all their very hard work to ensure quality and reputation of our product remains intact is being undermined by the actions of their government. We believe the decision taken by government is wrong and reversible. This Legislature has the power to reverse this decision through support of our motion and ultimately that is what we want and are asking.

I admire so much the spirit and professionalism of our potato industry under such pressures, but the Prince Edward Island potato board has expressed disappointment with government's decision and, indeed, the manner in which it was delivered.

A phone call seems like a poor way of delivering such devastating news. As you know, our caucus has asked many questions in the House regarding this matter, but we have been left with the impression that the minister simply doesn't get it. He seems to try and suggest that only a small portion of the industry is being affected by this move and it just isn't that big of a deal.

The potato board in their press release was quite clear. This decision puts the health of the potato industry in Prince Edward Island at risk.

A committee of potato growers and packers, board staff, and government staff was established and recommendations were solicited from an expert in plant health regarding the possibility of the elimination of disinfection services for fresh potato shipments.

I would note that there is a lower risk of disease transmission in the fresh market, but a lower risk, as far as I am concerned, does not mean no risk. Nevertheless, the potato board was willing to compromise.

They did, however, call for disinfection services to remain for seed shipments, used potato handling equipment sourced from outside the province, coming in and going, and on-farm storage disinfections which carry much higher levels of risk to the industry.

Their recommendations would have resulted in reduced costs for disinfection services. Yet these proposed changes were rejected by government. Not only that, the board was simply told that the decision was made to cut the service, and negotiations were over. The old my way or the highway attitude of the government once again reared its ugly head.

I believe that the government had no intention of bargaining on this matter. The decision was made and government was not about to change it. I think that even goes to the minister's statement the other day when he said he received the budget and he implemented it. It's his budget. He should have put the services where they were needed.

It is particularly concerning that Greg Donald, general manager of potato board, stated in the board's release that: It is disappointing to see such a unilateral, and in our view, reckless decision made without attempting to find common ground with representatives of one of the largest economic engines of our province.

It is shocking that this government has shown such little respect for the potato industry which has ensured economic security for thousands of families and businesses in this province.

I remember back in the spring when a motion was on the floor to support the potato industry and this House unanimously supported that motion. Now we're doing this.

This government is about to bite the hand that feeds it. Farm cash receipts alone total in the \$250-million mark. We are talking

about less than \$500,000 a year service that is crucial to the reputation and high value placed on our products.

The \$10-per-truck fee contributes \$127,000 to the total cost of the program. I understand the board didn't even know the program was losing money. They were never advised. When they asked for details government refused to provide them. This is what I've been told.

The big question is: Why put a halt to this service and put a billion dollar industry at risk? We cannot afford to take this chance. Why put people out of work when your government is always talking about the importance of job creation? It goes to what I've said in previous statements: we always cut the frontline service that this province requires. We never look at administration, we never look at management.

Mr. LaVie: Shame, shame!

Leader of the Opposition: There are 25 people and their families affected here –

Mr. LaVie: Thirty five.

Leader of the Opposition: – and while only one is full-time, the others are part-time and seasonal, that depend on these jobs. It is not easy to find work in this province and costs are rising every day.

This province has been fortunate not to have had an outbreak of bacterial ring rot in some years, but I can only think that the main reason is because we have a disinfection service in place.

I must say it that I've heard other provinces state they only wish they could provide that level of service to this same industry in their provinces. That service has been an important preventative measure. What happens when it is removed? The bigger question is: Are we really willing to find out and can we afford to take that chance? I know the industry is not prepared to take that gamble.

We have hundreds of tractor-trailers coming in here daily and no doubt they are coming from other potato producing areas. They need to be disinfected to ensure they are not carrying diseases. We know our neighbours

in the country next door are very picky about letting our potatoes through their borders. They don't want diseases either and they don't need much of a reason to turn our trucks around at the border.

I had a fellow tell me back within the last month that he was at a potato industry meeting down in Texas to do with Lays chips and our potatoes were talked about, about the safety nets that are in place.

Let's make sure we don't give them any reason to shut our borders down. Our disinfection program is just one element of crop management that they look to as a safeguard for accepting our exports. We don't want to, and we cannot, jeopardize their confidence.

Our motion calls for the province to temporarily pause – let's take a moment – to stop this decision to end the potato disinfection services and to allow time for a collaborative solution to be developed between the province, the potato industry and other possible stakeholders. I expect that a government that campaigned on collaboration and citizen engagement will support our motion and ensure that a solution is found.

This should be a free vote. Every member should have a chance to openly talk on this motion and support it. We're talking about a motion to put a stop, or put a hold on, what decision government is putting in place. We cannot take the chance of hurting our industries. We can't. If we lose these industries, if we lose these markets, can the government guarantee that we'll get them back? We cannot answer that question. We cannot take the chance.

I further expect that a government that relies heavily on the dollars generated by this \$1 billion industry will be anxious to ensure that it does nothing that will jeopardize it.

I would ask for the support of all our members in this House today for our motion, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The seconder of the motion, the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira and the Opposition Whip.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Like the mover of this motion, I frankly have to state that I am disappointed that I have to stand in our Legislative Assembly today and defend our \$1 billion potato industry against the reckless action of this government.

To tell the truth, I just can't understand why this government would make a decision to cut disinfection services on PEI in our potato industry. They have also destroyed a good relationship between our potato industry and the government by their failure to be open and upfront with the potato board.

I had many discussions with the potato board. Great group for Prince Edward Island. Great group to deal with. (Indistinct) issues on the table. Talk the issues off the table. Love talking to them. Great organization, the PEI Potato Board.

Again, I don't see this government living up to its promises of collaboration and transparency.

I don't see where you have worked with our industry in good faith. It is particularly concerning that Greg Donald, general manager of the potato board, notes that: Previously, the Prince Edward Island Potato Board has enjoyed good dialogue and engagement with the minister and deputy minister of agriculture. That trust and good will has been shattered by the manner in which these negotiations were handled.

I believe it is very important for our government and our industries to work together, to ensure best practices for all involved. Given the fact that we have limited resources, we should all want to see our industries grow and flourish. I don't think our objective should be to put our industry at risk.

I don't understand the minister of agriculture's argument that since we haven't had bacterial ring rot in our province for some years it is safe to stop the disinfection services. That doesn't make sense either,

and as I understand it that there have been 53 cases of bacterial ring rot detected in seed lots in Canada since 2005. I don't think that means that it has disappeared.

I would also like to remind this House that our seed growers in this province have been faced with increased costs due to changes in the crop insurance program and increased soil testing costs to meet export market requirements. The fact is that input costs for our farmers are on the rise in every area of operation and farm debt is skyrocketing. We must be able to ensure that our farmers are able to recoup the earnings they need to continue to operate in our province and putting their industry at risk is not the way to go.

The government's decision, says the potato board, is not only reckless but it is dangerous. I doubt they would be using such words publicly if they did not have some real concerns.

As outlined earlier by the mover of this motion, our farmers in all areas are often at the mercy of the weather and by all accounts, with global warming on the rise, they will face even more extreme weather events. It has also been indicated, however, that one of the results of global warming will be an increase in crop diseases and infestations by non-traditional insects. All of these elements combine to ensure one thing, and that is rising costs and need for even greater crop protection.

Once again, the province lacks a long-term vision for our primary industries. I mentioned that to the minister of agriculture. Global warming is a reality, and that's a reality we have to face. Global warming is a reality, we are seeing it now, and it needs to be part of any decision made by government, any government. It's got to be a decision.

As I see it we should be doing everything we can to support our primary industries to ensure they are sustainable long into the future. Our farmers have shown that they are good stewards of our lands. They help to feed families all over the world. We got the number one potato right here on Prince Edward Island, and that's worldwide. We got the best potato in the world right here on Prince Edward Island and nobody can take

that away from us and we need to protect that. We've been protecting that with disinfection for the last 30 years. Why change it? They help sustain our economy and small rural communities and, as I stated, without rural communities, we don't have cities. That's what drives our cities.

I would ask for a free vote in this House today. Let the people vote the way they want.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: It is a free vote.

Mr. LaVie: Don't be like Justin Trudeau up in Ottawa telling them how to vote. Don't be a Lawrence MacAulay. Vote the way your heart wants to vote.

Mr. R. Brown: You're telling your side how to vote.

Mr. LaVie: Your vote is a free vote on this

—

Mr. R. Brown: That's because we know how to vote.

Mr. Aylward: We don't have to be told.

Mr. LaVie: — that's all I'm asking in this House. Have it a free vote. Don't be a Justin Trudeau and tell his constituents, his people, how to vote, his members. Vote freely, and that's fair. That's all we ask is fair, and that's fair. Again, I would ask the members of this Legislative Assembly to support our potato farmers.

Ms. Biggar: To Justin Trudeau.

Mr. LaVie: Come off. Support our potato farmers. You don't have to toe the party line, and that's fair, and don't fire anybody for not toeing the party line. Have a free vote on this issue. It's our major industry on PEI and they need our support on this issue. I would ask everyone in this House to support this motion, please.

I would ask that this government, the Cabinet — that's who made this decision, I'm not going to blame the minister of agriculture, that wasn't his decision himself

—

Mr. Myers: The MC voted for it too.

Mr. LaVie: – the Cabinet, he has to go with his Cabinet, and I understand that and he has to be the one to go out front and defend your guys' decision, Cabinet decision. I would ask this government to go back to the table and sit down with the potato board to find a workable solution. That's all we ask is to go back to the table, sit down with the potato board, and redo it. Please, that's all this motion is asking. We want these services to continue for the betterment of our industry and all Islanders.

We want this issue resolved. The farmers want this resolved. I am confident that working together in collaboration a solution can be found and it will be found, working together. That's exactly what the Premier stated, working together. That's what we put this motion forward for, is working together.

Whether it's working together to get a bridge, whether it's working together to get a French school, whether it's working together to get a manor, it's working together. Whether it's working together to get a main street in Souris, whether it's working together to get a guard rail in St. Margarets, that's what government does to make things happen on PEI.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) have to widen the bridge in Souris to get everything in.

Mr. LaVie: I would ask the Members of the Legislative Assembly to do the right thing and support our motion.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to second this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Henderson: The podium please, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to talk on this very important motion before the Legislature here today.

I'm speaking to you as the Member from O'Leary-Inverness, one of the major potato-growing areas in this province but I'm also speaking to you today as a former potato seed grower. In my previous profession I used to grow about 100 acres of seed potatoes, various varieties from Red Pontiacs, Shepodies, Russet Burbanks, Kennebecs, Superiors.

I always found that the PEI disinfection service was a very valuable asset for me. Not that I couldn't keep my farm clean or that I couldn't do the proper phytosanitary issues of my operation, but I was really wanting that certificate that said that process was done properly and it was there should anything happen on my farm that might impact a potential sale that I could have.

I sold seed potatoes to different organizations. Some of them had been exported. I think I had some Red Pontiacs that went to Uruguay. I've had seed that I would sell to various farmers. Valley Grove Farms in Tyne Valley, I used to sell seed to them and used to also grow seed for them.

Now, as an individual, I'm not a person that's necessarily a what-if kind of guy. I know there are lots of things that can happen. We can sometimes say the sky will fall or you could take a heart attack at any time, or whatever. But I am a person that tries to be very pragmatic in the way I look at the risks and I like to manage those risks.

As a government we do a lot of health safety risks to prevent risks. We inoculate with flu vaccines, we inoculate for smallpox, we inoculate for polio. Now, there's a pretty unlikely risk that those things can happen, but we have seen situations where people have stopped inoculating. There was the fear that it was causing certain other issues like ADHD and some of those types of things, and now all of a sudden we've seen TB and some of those types of diseases start to come back into our area, or the country of Canada, what have you.

I think that's always important to note that, yes, things can happen if we don't do things properly and keep up our due diligence on those types of issues to prevent what-if happens. Because if there is an outbreak of polio, if there is an outbreak of bacterial ring rot, things can happen. It costs a lot to fix

that up. It can damage reputations and it can damage people's health, if I look at the polio issue.

This debate is really about: How much phytosanitary risk are we willing to take and how much do we want to risk the reputation of this province? I want to make this very clear. It is our number one industry, the agricultural industry in this province, and the potato industry is our number one commodity.

We've stated many times here in the House and as a government that we are Canada's Food Island. It's an acronym or a title that we want to hold pretty valuable and dear. We've also said many times we want to try to reduce the trade deficit here in this province. Obviously our number one export is potatoes. If we can make sure that we can expand into other markets and get more value for the potatoes, we are going to reduce our trade deficit. It's just an automatic situation here.

The high standards of disinfection can be an asset to our potato industry. I've asked questions in this House previously about the issue with the Canadian government recently signing the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. As those operations move forward there's going to be markets open. That's what a trade deal does, it allows us access to new markets without tariffs and taxes and things of that nature.

I think it's very important that we're on the precipice of something very good here in Prince Edward Island and I don't think it's the time – and I've stated that in question period – it's not the time to take these types of unnecessary risks.

I want to talk a little bit about just the disinfection services itself because I think sometimes maybe a lot of people in the House here aren't as familiar with this particular issue. I'm also going to talk about the impacts the potato industry has in my riding of O'Leary-Inverness. I'll talk for some time on this particular subject because this is important to me.

PEI disinfection services have been in place for some time. I think 50 years, I've heard some people say. I don't know the exact

time when disinfection services started on the Island. There are three sections of PEI disinfection services. I want to make sure people understand this. The first section is we have the Borden-Carleton disinfection station when trucks come to Prince Edward Island.

As they enter Prince Edward Island, if they're going to have any contact with potatoes, it's mandatory that they go and disinfect and make sure that there's no potential risk that those trucks are going to be taking anything from off wherever they were coming from that might be a risk of, say, bacterial ring rot or what have you.

The second issue that we deal with is a mobile unit. The mobile unit, they would do trucks as well, maybe more trucks within Prince Edward Island, and they do all farm machinery.

The other section that's out there is the potato wart. That section, as the minister mentioned, that is not going to be impacted by this. But the potato wart is a contract that PEI disinfection services or the provincial government has with CFIA to contain that particular quarantinable pest. If I go on further on that, I would certainly say that the – I don't want to say the only reason, but one of the major reasons why we have access to the US market for PEI potatoes is because we had PEI disinfection services ready to deal with this particular issue as potato wart was found and we were able to implement that to the satisfaction of our competing jurisdiction, the US.

By putting the proper protocols in place, having the disinfection services, we were able to maintain and keep that market open. I shudder to think today if that US market wasn't available to our table potatoes and seed and whatever we happen to ship down there. That would have a sizeable impact on the provincial economy.

I think the reality is having that service available – there's an infrastructure in place for disinfection services. We have people that are properly trained. We have people that understand the proper phytosanitary protocols. We have the equipment. I know there's pressure washers and disinfectant, but it's all there and it's ready to go. It's ready to happen should an outbreak – but the

biggest issue is when you run into a situation where there's an outbreak – and I mentioned before about trade deals – the opposing jurisdiction or the competing jurisdiction, they determine the phytosanitary protocols that they're willing to accept.

In this particular case we had all the arguments in place to make sure that that US market stayed open and the US was able to agree to that.

The potato is Canada's and PEI's largest horticultural crop by acres harvested and yield. I think that's pretty important to note. It's also Prince Edward Island's number one crop and largest horticultural crop. The potato industry is probably one of the most crucial industries to the province. The potato industry is worth \$1 billion to the PEI economy. It's 11% of our GDP on PEI and it employs 12% of our workforce in that production of over 90,000 acres of potatoes in Prince Edward Island.

I need to make sure that everybody in this House understands the impact that that has. I know the minister of innovation has said many times, and he's stated at our legislative committee, when the rural communities are doing well the urban communities are doing well. If people are making money in this province out in the rural communities, they need to come in to buy their vehicles, they need to go get the goods and services that they may require, and this is how important this industry is. Just remember that, \$1 billion to our economy.

When I was coming down with the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville he was asking me just a few questions about the potato industry when we drove by Cavendish Farms in New Annan. I mentioned there that 60% of the potato production on Prince Edward Island is for processing, 30% is for table stock, and 10% is for seed. When I mentioned the Cavendish produce in O'Leary Corner, that's all table stock production. Then there's the Fortune Grove Farms. There's another bunch of individuals out there that will grow production just for seed and seed production can go in many different avenues. Seed starts from nuclear stock, it goes to pre-Elite, E1, E2, E3, E4 foundation, and that's the only seed that can be used to reproduce

potatoes in Prince Edward Island for potato production.

Nuclear seed and pre-Elite seed usually starts at the elite seed farm in Fox Island. It starts off in a test tube and it's propagated many times over each year. It automatically drops a standard so it'll – say if you're E1 one year you can go to E2 the next year automatically, unless you have certain virus levels that might impact that standard. Sometimes seed can go from E1 to a foundation very quickly just because it had too much leafroller mosaic virus in the seed, and when we do our post-harvest testing that confirms what the standard of virus is. It determines the level of seed that they're able to produce.

When you get into the amount of seeds, we grow about 100 varieties of potatoes on Prince Edward Island and there's about 5,000 potato varieties grown worldwide. This is a large industry. Canada is actually the world's number seventh exporter of potatoes. Sometimes we think: Canada, we must be producing lots of potatoes. We're seventh. It's a very competitive market. You're competing against many countries: Netherlands, France, Germany, Egypt, China and the USA all export more potatoes than Canada does.

I just want to make sure people understand it's a competitive marketplace out there and a number of those jurisdictions that I just mentioned, and the other ones are France, Germany, USA, they are competing and they are all part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership or the CETA agreements. It's a very competitive marketplace and they can determine the rules of engagement sometimes.

In Prince Edward Island potatoes are our number one exporting crop and we export potatoes to over 20 countries around the world. I mentioned before I used to export potatoes to Uruguay. You see potatoes going to Puerto Rico, you see them going all over the world, Venezuela, Thailand. I was talking to Rod MacNeill at West Isle Enterprises Ltd. in the minister of transportation's district and he just sent a shipment to Thailand, so there are potatoes from Prince Edward Island going all over the world.

When you think about that – and I mentioned how competitive our marketplace is, and one of our big markets is the US market which we're fairly close to, obviously. I know there are lots of geopolitical issues that happen around the world. We're seeing an election starting in the US. We've got Barack Obama, a very reasonable president, an individual I'm sure who is very good and understands import and export trade and deals like that. But if you look at it in the US and you see the Republican Party, they tend to be a little more maybe right-wing in its ideology. The current leader right now in the polls is Donald Trump.

Imagine if we are into a situation if there was ever a phytosanitary outbreak in Prince Edward Island, Donald Trump is the president. I don't want to say what if, but there could be that possibility. All of a sudden he's talking about putting a wall up. They would shut the potato industry down in Prince Edward Island in a heartbeat if that happened.

That's pretty concerning if that happened. I shudder to think that that would be the possibility, but I'm just saying: What if?

Mr. LaVie: There's a man that should be in Cabinet.

Mr. Henderson: The other issue is the TPP and CETA. Some of those countries who export potatoes are not only – like, I'd mentioned some of the exporters that produce or export potatoes above us, but there's also other major exporting countries out there. They're below us in the amount of potatoes they export, but Chile, New Zealand, Peru, Mexico, Australia, Poland, and Ireland all export potatoes too.

Like I say, they're going to access the same markets that we have access to. But if something happens, once again, these competing countries will be challenging the phytosanitary processes and protocols that we have in place. If they say they can produce something better or different, they're going to have an edge on our market.

The potato actually is the world's fourth largest agricultural crop and Canada is the 14th largest potato producer of potatoes in the world. PEI produces, and I'm very proud

to say this, 25% of the total Canadian crop. So it's a significant industry in this province. PEI grows the most potatoes of any province in Canada.

If you'd also like to know a little bit more about the potato, in Europe the potato is the most essential crop in the European situation as far as providing food. We've seen what's happened in the past world wars where the potato – there were places that had difficulty finding food, the Netherlands and some of those places, and they're pretty grateful for Canada for shipping food over to that place.

We've seen the situation of the Irish potato famine where late blight happened to be a disease that happened to impact upon that area, or that country. People had to emigrate, then, to Prince Edward Island. A lot of our descendants here today came from the Irish potato famine. I know the Member from Alberton-Roseville mentioned that when we were coming down today that Patrick – I guess you can't say the name – Murphy is obviously a very Irish name.

Some other interesting facts to note there is that the world potato average, the average yield, is 17 tons per hectare. Seventeen tons doesn't sound like a very good crop, but in the USA the average yield is 44 tons per hectare. New Zealand is one of the highest producing, of potato yields as far as yield, is 80 tons per hectare.

Now, on PEI – I was trying to convert this into – but anyway, in PEI we usually run about 300 hundredweight per acre and the Canadian average yield is about 33 tons per hectare. Once again, I'm just trying to impact – there are other countries out there that do this job well too and, once again, very competitive.

Potatoes are actually one of the things that yield abundantly with the least amount of effort. They adapt very well to diverse climates. They excel best in cool, moist climates like Prince Edward Island's.

Potatoes are the highest yield of calories –

Mr. LaVie: Filibustering.

Mr. Henderson: – per acre than corn and they also yield more than rice, wheat, soya

beans, and they're there to feed the world's population.

The Irish potato famine sent many descendants to Prince Edward Island due to that late blight disease. I just wanted to make that clear a little bit.

Potatoes can be boiled, baked, mashed or fried. That's always a (Indistinct) that gets said many times. It's made into vodka. Potato starch is used as a food binder and a thickener. And it's even –

Mr. LaVie: The motion hit the floor.

Mr. Henderson: In India it's a remedy for skin burns when potato skins are mixed with honey.

The issue out there ultimately is about possible international quarantinable pests. Once again, we're not only dealing with one particular quarantinable pest. We're not dealing with the issue around just only bacterial ring rot. You can get diseases from potato cyst nematode, potato rot nematode, which is something in the area that I happen to reside in in my riding. There have been a number of fields that have been quarantined that you cannot produce potatoes in at all. It's even right on the deeds that they cannot produce potatoes. That's caused from potato rot nematode

That might be where potato disinfection services started, when that happened. I believe that was in the 1940s or 1950s. You also have potato mop-top pomovirus, potato wart, soy bean cyst nematode, potato spindle tuber virus, bacterial ring rot, PVYn, and many others all known as possible international quarantinable pests. Every particular country would have a different issue around that.

Bacterial ring rot is one of those highly contagious diseases and it's one disease that we've been trying to get under control for some time here. I know the minister made the statement in the legislative committee on agriculture and he talked about the issue about: bacterial ring rot on Prince Edward Island is functionally eradicated. We also asked the question about the issue around: Is it certified that it's eradicated on Prince Edward Island? It is not certified as eradicated on Prince Edward Island.

I think that's what concerns me most. If there are scientists out there that are willing to put their name on a piece of paper that says that this place is certified bacterial ring rot-free, the whole debate changes. But we're not. I think that's something that concerns me as a former potato grower and seed grower, as well as a representative of the riding of O'Leary-Inverness that is so impacted by the importance of the potato industry.

The potato board issued a press release I guess maybe a week ago, a couple of weeks ago, and in that press release it identified 53 cases of bacterial ring rot had been detected in seed lots in Canada since 2005. The other part of this is that we're starting to see more and more seed coming in to Prince Edward Island from other parts of Canada. I know there is seed comes in from Saskatchewan, there's seed comes in from Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick. Yes, they have to have CFIA approvals, I understand that. They have to have their certificates that it's free of certain diseases. But the risk increases when you're bringing more seed into the province. It's not so much what we do in our province, but as trucks and vehicles enter into the province there is a greater risk again, is what I'm trying to identify here. I think that's very important to be aware of.

Like I say, I believe the only jurisdiction that I'm aware of that has been certified bacterial ring rot free is British Columbia. I'd have to confirm that but I believe that's the case.

Once again, if there is some way that we can be deemed certified bacterial ring rot free the situation changes somewhat significantly. But we're not there. The fact that we have been doing a good job, we've been keeping this contagion and (Indistinct) under control, I think – let's keep on the good work that we're doing and maybe we can get to that level someday that we can be bacterial ring rot-free and certified to do that.

I think the other part of it is that as this debate has unfolded somewhat I've made a lot of calls to individuals just to get their input and comments on this particular issue. I talked to a couple of very veteran potato

people in the industry. I think these two individuals I have a lot of respect for.

The first one is Alan Parker. Alan Parker used to operate the elite seed farm one time here in the province and he now – he operated a potato operation, I believe, in Ukraine and understands the competitiveness of the world markets and understands the value of having good disinfection services. From his perspective he questioned whether this was going to be something that would be a wise move based on the fact that he understands the world markets and how competitive they may be.

The other individual that I've talked to about this a lot of times is Orville Willis. Orville is a senior guy, he's worked a lot in the potato industry and he also was concerned about this particular announcement.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to adjourn debate because I have much more to say on this particular subject, and I will adjourn debate to refer to another motion.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank you for the indulgence of the members here today. We do have a group here that have driven an awful long way today and they've spent their afternoon here in order to hear this motion. So I do appreciate the indulgence of the (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Mundy: – which I'm also hoping to get to a vote today.

Today I'm very pleased to move this motion, Support for grandparents acting as primary care givers.

This issue first came apparent –

Speaker: Excuse me, hon. member.

Ms. Mundy: Oh, I have to move it, sorry.

Speaker: Call the motion.

Ms. Mundy: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, that Motion No. 60 now be read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Committee Clerk: Motion No. 60.

The hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors moves, seconded by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, the following motion:

WHEREAS it is becoming more common for grandparents to take on the role of primary caregiver for their grandchildren on Prince Edward Island for a variety of reasons;

AND WHEREAS raising a second generation brings many rewards;

AND WHEREAS compared to non-caregivers, grandparents raising grandchildren have significantly more mental and physical health problems;

AND WHEREAS grandparents face additional challenges as they may be on a fixed income, retired, or unable to return to work;

AND WHEREAS many grandparents are raising children through informal arrangements and are not in the social assistance system;

AND WHEREAS research suggests that economic relief for low-income caregiver grandparents may be successful at reducing the burdens they face;

AND WHEREAS there is a need for a variety of services and policies that can provide missing resources;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Assembly urges the provincial government to review and explore supports given to grandparents who are their grandchild's primary care giver and to ensure that adequate assistance is in place;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this topic be directed to the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness for further exploration.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

Today I am very pleased to move this motion, Support for grandparents acting as primary care givers.

This issue first became apparent when a constituent asked me to attend a meeting of a grandparents' support group who are primary caregivers to their children's children. The meeting was only scheduled for one hour, but it lasted for over two, as the stories I was hearing were coming from a place of love and frustration.

I related to this to my own experiences as I lived awhile with my paternal grandmother as my father was a single parent while serving our country in the military. My grandmother had already raised three children and was now responsible for two little girls. This is the reality of today.

According to the 2001 census nearly 57,000 grandparents were identified as being the primary caregivers to their grandchildren. This is referred to as a skip-generation family, as many grandchildren now live with their grandparents without the middle generation.

In 2012 over 30,000 children in Canada age 14 and under – that's 0.5% of all children in that age group – lived in skip-generation families, up nearly 20% from a decade earlier. A high rate of teenage pregnancy, mental and physical illness, parental substance abuse, incarceration, death, child abuse and financial crisis have all been factors identified in attributing to the rising number of children living with their grandparents.

Grandparents who raise grandchildren are more likely to be female, a First Nation heritage, unemployed, or retired. Grandmothers are also more disadvantaged than grandfathers in that they are statistically poorer, less likely to be married, more likely to be unemployed, and more than twice as likely to provide 60 or more hours per week of unpaid child care compared to grandfathers.

Overall, a senior as a primary caregiver contributes to the social fabric of Canada. Providing care strengthens the relationship between older adult caregivers and those who receive the care.

Raising a second generation brings many rewards, including the fulfillment of giving grandkids a sense of security and keeping the family together. Compared to non-caregivers, grandparents raising grandchildren have significantly more health problems, including depression, coronary heart disease, physical disabilities that limit activity, and chronic health conditions such as asthma and diabetes. But these health differences may in part reflect caregiver grandparents' low socioeconomic status rather than the impact of care giving.

Research has suggested that caregiving grandparents are vulnerable to a host of social problems including social isolation and poverty. This research has also shown that these caregivers often demonstrate poor self-assessed health status, considerable comorbidity, delayed help-seeking, and are more likely to play down the severity of their own personal health problems.

Raising children can be very expensive. Grandparents face additional challenges as they may be on a fixed income, retired, or unable to return to work. While grandparents are eligible for many publicly-funded economic assistance programs aimed at needy parent child families, many do not know they're eligible or how to access the programs, suggesting that outreach efforts should target grandparents.

Many grandparents are raising grandchildren through informal arrangements, without legal relationship such as custody or guardianship, and are not in the social assistance system. There are many studies that suggest economic relief for low-income caregiver grandparents through tax credits or via payments at foster care rates may be successful at reducing the burdens they face. Helping grandparents maintain financial stability may indirectly improve their emotional well-being.

Support groups can offer emotional support to grandparents as they cope with new roles and responsibilities, social isolation, and difficult family circumstances that

necessitated grandparent care and children's behavior and emotional problems. Support groups can also educate grandparents on the importance of preventative health care and health maintenance and can lead grandparents to the health fairs that offer low cost or free vaccinations and screenings.

There has recently been an increase in the amount of support groups for Island seniors who are providing care for their grandchildren. Topics discussed at these meetings include bullying, drug and alcohol awareness, and nutrition. There are many benefits to these groups, such as less fearful parenting or less relationship stress. Health clinics that serve both children and older adults would enable grandparent caregivers to receive health care for themselves and their grandchildren more easily on the same visit. Medical personnel could make assessing grandparent health during caregiving transitions a priority, presuming physicians and other health personnel elicit information about changes in living arrangements.

Children who move in with grandparents because of parental crisis do not face the same level of disruption or social stigma that placement in a non-kinship foster home can entail. Children living with grandparents are usually in familiar environment and in a culturally similar milieu. Furthermore, they retain ongoing contact with their other kin. Grandparents who step forward to provide care are usually willing to take on all siblings and it's very difficult for several siblings to be placed together in non-related foster care.

In kinship foster care grandparents do not have legal custody of the grandchild. Although the day-to-day needs are taken care of, the grandparent can't make any major decisions without first consent from the director of child welfare. Kinship foster care is also considered temporary custody. The goal is to still find the child a permanent home. Some grandparents prefer informal arrangements for this reason. In an informal arrangement the province still places the child with you and then steps out of the picture. There (Indistinct) further interference or oversight. These caregivers, however, do not receive monthly financial assistance.

As you can see, the traditional family is not so traditional anymore. The days of a mom and dad, two kids and a dog, aren't necessarily the norm as they were in the past. Legislation must be updated to reflect the ever-changing face of families today. It is my hope that Prince Edward Island can become a leader in policies and laws that can reflect the needs and provide supports for seniors as primary caregivers.

I encourage all members of this House to support this motion to allow the Islander grandparents who are acting as primary caregivers the supports and services they need to live a long, healthy life that can be shared with their grandchildren.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member for O'Leary-Inverness to second the motion.

Mr. Henderson: Having a busy day here, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to second this particular motion. It's a very important motion in supporting grandparents acting as primary caregivers. I know from my own perspective I was very fortunate to be raised by my biological parents, George and Brenda Henderson, but during my upbringing I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with my grandparents who I had the utmost respect for and felt that they really played a major role in who I am today.

My first grandparents, Edgar and Hazel Henderson, I spent an awful lot of time with them. I had working parents and they were next door to me and I had an opportunity to go up and I guess that's where my love of agriculture first got stimulated, I guess. I used to raise – I think my grandfather gave me a calf at about six years old. I took that calf and raised it and eventually it had a calf, and then I had two, and the list goes on, and that's kind of what got me into the farming industry. My grandmother Hazel, she was a teacher, just had around that time was retiring in my more formative years, but I remember her making me do the (Indistinct) McLean's process of writing. I don't know how well I turned out at it, but but those are

the types of things that – my grandparents were exceptional people.

Then on my mother's side I had Lowell and Olive Matthews. My grandfather Lowell used to live at our house usually in the wintertime. I don't know if people know where the Black Banks is, but that's where his house was. I don't believe the road was actually plowed and it was about five miles to where the plow went. He used to spend a lot of time – and once again, we shared a bedroom and he always influenced me a lot in the issues around work, just being a good individual, and respecting elders and being a real good community person.

So those are the people that had influence. My grandmother Olive, although she passed away when I was probably about six or seven years of age. I didn't get to know her quite as well, but I'm sure she was a loving grandmother in every way.

With that, I know I have constituents that are raising grandchildren. I won't say the names, but I have people in (Indistinct) that are raising their grandparents, and very challenging circumstances. I've had the chance to talk to them.

While I'm at it, too, I want to acknowledge Arlene McInnis as a constituent of mine from the Stewart Road-Enmore area. I know she works with individuals and trying to help them through the social aspects of that. I also acknowledge Pam McKinnon. Although not a constituent, her husband's a good friend and great people, and I know they're both good community people.

With that, I am seconding this motion, No. 60, Support for grandparents acting as primary care givers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Is there anyone else who would like to speak to the motion?

Question?

We have to go to the hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors to close debate on the motion.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I just want to thank the group for approaching me and thank them for driving up and their attendance today and staying, and I guess learning a little bit more about the Legislative Assembly while you were here.

I also thank my colleagues for deferring the last motion so that we could get this on the table today. It is a very important subject. It is something I truly believe that Prince Edward Island can be a leader in creating new laws and policies to assist these caregivers because our children are our best natural resource out there, so I thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are we ready for the question?

All those voting in support of the motion, say "yea".

Some Hon. Members: Yea!

Speaker: All those voting against the motion, say "nay".

The motion is carried and it is unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

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

At this time the opposition would like to revert to Motion No. 56.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Debate was adjourned by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, so I would ask the hon. member to continue debate on the motion.

Mr. Henderson: I'd like the podium again, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, when I finished off there I said I had talked to a number of veteran potato individuals in the potato industry, Orville Willis and Allan Parker, and consulted them on what their thoughts were. They certainly had some concerns about the phytosanitary risks that our province might be taking and

the impact it may have in a very competitive marketplace.

The other issue out there to be aware about is the potato warehouses. I think as we drive across Prince Edward Island we see numerous potato warehouses all across the island where seed potatoes can be stored, processing potatoes. Sometimes there's just walls between them. Once again, it's very important to make sure that those warehouses are disinfected and kept clean. Once again, I know the industry can do a good job of that too, but once again, the situation is about that phytosanitary risk and having that certificate that does that.

Why is phytosanitary risk such a big issue? Prince Edward Island has limited borders. We are one of the only jurisdictions out there that has limited access to our borders. We really only have, I'll say, four entry points to Prince Edward Island. You have the airport, obviously. I'm not going to count Mount Pleasant as it – but the Charlottetown airport. You have two ferry terminals, both at the Magdalen Islands that comes to Souris and then you have the Wood Islands location, and our Confederation Bridge. That makes us a very unique jurisdiction that we have that control. Other jurisdictions – I don't know if there's any other jurisdiction out there that has those limited access points.

Recently our *Guardian* had some editorial comments that government is taking an unnecessary risk here. I think it's important that we try to come up with some sort of a solution here that's some sort of a compromise. In my riding I think I noticed on Prince Edward Island there's 262 potato farmers that are registered as potato producers. In O'Leary-Inverness I have about 15 farms and I want to mention some of those farms: Triple S. Farms, Gorrill Produce, Harris Bros. Inc., Avard Smallman Farms, Jonathon MacLellan, Ralph Smallman, Jeff Smallman, John Sweet, John MacLean, I think Webbs Vegetables grow potatoes – I know they have the fingerlings – Triple B. Farms, Denton Ellis, Corey MacLean, S & J Potato, and Merle Ellis, all of these individuals.

A large component of our employers in the riding of O'Leary-Inverness, potatoes is what they grow to generate wealth in our

community. There are a lot of other farms that grow potatoes in my riding: Adair Shaw, Fortune Cove Farms, Callaghan Farms, Griffins, Boyce Rennie, Cavendish Produce and Johnny Wallace all are major producers of potatoes.

The Canadian Potato Museum, the PEI Potato Blossom Festival, all were generated around the concept that potatoes are the number one commodity and the number one wealth generator in my riding. There's over 10,000 people toured the potato museum each year the last two years. Significant people are interested in the potato industry and the importance of it.

The Fall Flavours event, Toe Taps & Taters, is developed around celebrating the potato and the impact it has on our province and as well in my riding.

The last thing I want to see is a new exhibit at the potato museum: extinct potato disinfectors. I just think that there's an issue around the good work that these people do. I know that we've seen issues around social media saying that farmers can pay their own way. But I think we need to make sure we understand the contributions that the agricultural community and the potato industry contribute to this province. I said before, a billion dollars the GDP, 12% of the PEI workforce. We need to know the importance of this industry and whether we're willing to take those risks.

I know the government has done exceptional work here in dealing with the issue around metal detection. That was all about the issue around the possible risks and the markets that could be lost just because of something happened that some individuals put deleterious issues or substances into these potatoes, metal in most cases.

I think the other issues we've seen – the increase in land prices, difficulties sometimes finding employees, the increase in technology on farms today and all of the issues about trying to be environmentally sustainable. Farmers are under a lot of pressure. There's a lot of expenses that they're paying. I think there's got to be a solution here to try to find a way that we can all come to a reasonable solution in paying reasonable cost-recovery measures in providing this particular service.

I'm reminded of the quote sometimes, an individual – and I hate to use US quotes but President Eisenhower mentioned one time that: Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from a field. It sometimes tells about the issues about the struggles with the farming. There's a lot to it.

This industry has come a long way from when the potatoes actually originated in the Andes mountains in Peru. It's a global industry. We have a significant export market. Last year I think just about 14,000 trucks that entered Prince Edward Island were disinfected.

I will go along with the arguing debate that maybe they did all that need to be done, I don't know. But the reality is 14,000 trucks entered this province that were going to be in contact with potato fields, so we have to come to some solution to say: How many of them need to be done and when do they need to be done?

PEI disinfections has been in operation for, like I said before, about 50 years, and I have to assume that the people in charge of this industry understood the importance of it back then. I can't see that it was all irrelevant work that they did. I think when you look at the issues about the small amounts of bacterial ring rot that have been found on Prince Edward Island over that period of time that we're heading in the right direction. I'd be remiss if we slackened off a little bit here and didn't let that happen.

As a government I recommend that we try to look for options. Negotiate a deal with the potato industry; find some way to come up with a reasonable solution here. We talked about that at the moment they don't charge for potato warehouses. Maybe there's something that could be done there. I think maybe we need to look at other solutions. Can we come up with options that use other services that could be done through the disinfection industry?

I know other provinces like British Columbia and Manitoba, they disinfect for zebra mussels in the recreational boating industry. We talked about before there's Aleutian disease in mink. Are there other services that we can do to make this work?

I think when we look at cost-recovery – we see cost-recovery in a lot of industries. Health PEI with restaurant inspections, the liquor inspectors. There are all kinds of issues around there that there's a certain percentage of cost-recovery and I think this industry can impact every Islander.

I think the other side of it I wanted to say is that we need to sometimes put a face on this as far as the jobs that might be lost. In my riding of O'Leary-Inverness I have five individuals that work for PEI Disinfection Services. These individuals are hard-working, they do a good job, they're trained, they do all the proper phytosanitary protocols and they make sure that their job is done well. These individuals, I want to recognize their hard work: Willis McKie, Danny Bulger, Barry Rogers, Larry Tuplin, Donnie Sweet. I think we need to have at least a plan for these people.

Can mobile disinfection services still remain? Make sure that those warehouses are clean. Make sure that the seed coming in to the province – I'll give another quote here but it was made in this Legislature at one time by Sir Henry Davis, a former premier. It said: Wise persons change their views when necessary, fools never do. I think it's important that we look at this issue, come up with a solution that makes some sense.

I want every member to speak to this vote as best that they can. I don't want to be an MLA that was representing the potato industry or the riding of O'Leary-Inverness that five or 10 years down the road there was something happened and everybody tells me: I told you so.

With that, I'm certainly saying I'm in support of this particular motion. As an MLA for O'Leary-Inverness, that this is our number one industry. I don't think "I told you so" can cut it in this business, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Question!

Speaker: We have a list of speakers, members, and I'm going to stick by it.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

It gives me great pleasure to stand here and speak to this motion. I want to ensure the House and our potato industry out there that, first and foremost, both myself and our government fully support the potato industry and have full appreciation for the value they bring to our provincial economy and the great work they do in employing people and driving the economy of our province.

As Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries I feel it is important though to speak to the motion and offer some clarification to government's decision to discontinue the provincial potato disinfection service as it is, and has been, delivered lately.

Unintentionally, I believe, some misinformation has been put out there that could affect our industry. I want to ensure the members of this Legislative Assembly, our Island potato industry, the public, and our trading partners, that in no way does this decision affect the quality of the food safety of Prince Edward Island potatoes.

Before I do that, I would like to stress our government's commitment to the growth and development of our primary industries. We know the economic importance that our primary industries of agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries provides for our province and we will continue to work with the industry in a constructive and open manner to pursue excellence and increased profits for our producers. At the same time, government has a commitment to the Island taxpayers and their industries to ensure that the programs and services that we provide still meet our intended goals and are being operated in a fiscally responsible manner.

During the budgetary process in the spring it was noted that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries was putting forth \$500,000 annually to operate the provincial potato disinfection service, but was only seeing a revenue of approximately 125,000. With a fee that had not been raised since 1997 despite the increased cost of the service, salaries, fuel, equipment and maintenance to government, my department

decided to increase the fee paid by industry from \$10 to \$30 per truck. This would see the department increase its revenue and help government move towards a more balanced budget.

The fee increase was decided upon without questioning the effectiveness or necessity of the service and our department's budget was passed in the first sitting of this Legislative Assembly this summer. The PEI Potato Board expressed its concern about the fee increase. In a meeting with myself, department staff, and the PEI Potato Board, I agreed to hold off on the increased fee in an effort for all parties to work together to find alternative solutions.

Over the years the Province of Prince Edward Island and the PEI Potato Board have had a strong working relationship built upon mutual respect and I hope that will continue. Together we established a working group to further look into the Provincial Potato Disinfection Service. My only direction to the group was that any possible alternatives had to meet three specifications. Firstly, it had to meet government's budgetary requirements, it had to be operationally sound, and it had to meet all biosecurity requirements.

The working group met four times over the course of a few months. During one of those meetings the working group brought in a retired CFIA plant pathologist who had expertise in bacterial ring rot. This respected professional provided his opinion that bacterial ring rot had been functionally eradicated and posed a low threat probability to the Island's potato industry. Data from CFIA, obtained by the PEI Potato Board, matched this claim as there had only been five cases – meaning five individual seed sources – since 2008 across this country.

Prince Edward Island is the only province to provide a provincial disinfection program to the potato industry, yet other parts of the country are not seeing any more or fewer cases of bacterial ring rot. There is no correlation between Prince Edward Island providing a disinfection service and the low number of bacterial ring rot cases in Prince Edward Island. Other provinces are seeing low probability too because the disease is functionally eradicated. Despite the science, my department was willing to work with

industry to continue some level of service in a cost-shared agreement.

Through the course of our meetings several options were put forth by the working group, and the final recommendations that the PEI Potato Board submitted to the department included the following: firstly, removing the regulatory requirement for disinfection of commercial trucks; secondly, all potato transporters would disinfect at their own discretion; third, eliminating the Borden disinfection service and reducing the mobile unit service to disinfecting seed trucks and on-farm visits; also, eliminating truck fees; and the province continuing to retain the clean-up oversight of bacterial ring rot-infected farms at no charge to producers if a case were to occur.

All told, these recommendations would reduce the provincial government's net expenses by \$87,000 annually to the potato board's belief.

These recommendations did not meet the budgetary requirements criteria for the department that the department had set forth. Therefore, the department recommended the service that would see the department deliver a revised service that would include a mobile disinfection service at a cost-shared 40% for the department, 60% for the producer, province and industry scenario. The department would continue to provide clean-up oversight of BRR-infected premises at no cost to producers. This option was rejected by the board.

Over the years the Province of Prince Edward Island and the PEI Potato Board have had a strong working relationship built on mutual respect. Over the course of this decision-making process I believe the department maintained that level of respect towards the potato board and was willing to work with them to come up with cost-shared alternatives to potato disinfection services. However, after several meetings and many discussed options we were too far apart on where we saw the service going.

The assumption has been raised in this House, in the media, and through this motion, that this decision puts the industry at greater risk for plant health issues and will affect the quality and reputation of our Island potatoes and put human health at risk.

We have a responsibility to ensure accurate information is out there about our industry. In no way does this decision affect the quality or food safety of our Island potato products.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: The Provincial Potato Disinfection Service has been in operation for over 30 years and has more or less remained unchanged since that time. The sole purpose of the service is to offer protection against bacterial ring rot, a disease that affects the appearance of potatoes but is not associated with any human health risks.

The opposition continues to stress that government has made the decision to discontinue the BRR-disinfection service as it currently operates solely due to budgetary constraints. While it is no secret that the government has committed to fiscal responsibility, the decision to discontinue the current mechanism for BRR-disinfection was based on expert opinion and science.

A respected, retired CFIA plant pathologist with expertise in BRR provided his opinion to the working group that bacterial ring rot had been functionally eradicated and posed a low threat probability to the Island's potato industry. Data from CFIA, obtained by the potato board, matched this claim as there have only been five cases – meaning five individual seed sources – since 2008 Canada-wide.

Prince Edward Island is the only province to provide a provincial disinfection program to the potato industry, yet other parts of the country are not seeing any more.

As the motion states, the province and potato industry have worked together to develop an effective system of controls against plant disease. That continues with the control of diseases that do impact the sector. We have worked in collaboration with the potato board to develop both a paperwork and infield audit as a means to gauge compliance with virus regulations. Based on the results of the first two years the industry as a whole is doing a great job.

The department works in cooperation with CFIA on nematode field surveillance. We

identify the crops planted in positive and all adjacent fields and report back to CFIA. We also supervise the cleaning of vehicles and machinery leaving a nematode positive field to ensure soils stays in the field. We have regulations that prevent potato cull piles from being exposed from June 15th to August 31st as a means to prevent late blight spread.

As well, producers importing potatoes for the purpose of planting on PEI must apply for a planting permit. The importer must provide proof of a negative BRR test as well as an acceptable post-harvest test in order to receive a permit.

Programs that provide protection against diseases such as potato wart – which has been known to close markets on PEI potatoes – still continue. In addition, the province will support members of the potato board industry, particularly the seed industry, in the implementation of on-farm biosecurity measures through the Growing Forward 2 Assurance System Program.

We have met with the PEI Potato Board since the decision to discontinue the BRR disinfection program was made and have gone over how the industry can use our GF2 program to support their on-farm biosecurity practices like other industries on Prince Edward Island use.

As supported from the examples I've just provided – the scientific data that BRR is functionally eradicated and the province's commitment to support biosecurity practices on-farm for potato producers – the department believes that we have an effective system in place to control any plant disease issues that the industry faces.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: There have also been concerns raised about market and trade opportunities that this decision puts at risk. This motion, as written, also raises that concern.

This decision to discontinue the Potato Provincial Disinfection Service for BRR –

Ms. Casey: Call the hour.

Some Hon. Members: Extend the hour.

Mr. McIsaac: – will not –

Ms. Casey: Call the hour.

Some Hon. Members: Extend the hour.

Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent to extend the hour?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

An Hon. Member: No.

Premier MacLauchlan: (Indistinct) have to come back tonight.

Mr. Myers: That's two hours from now.

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

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: You may be seated.

Point of Order

Mr. Aylward: Mr. Speaker?

Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to call a point of order. This afternoon, just prior to the supper break, the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy contravened Rule 113, which states:

“Members are permitted to use electric devices in the Legislative Chamber, and in committee, with the exception of formal occasions and other occasions deemed by the Speaker (or the Chair) to be inappropriate times for their use. Sound must be muted, and use of such devices must not interrupt the proceedings. Devices may not be used as a telephone, recording device, camera, or pager.”

The minister – I witnessed her. She accepted a phone call in the Legislative Assembly, walked across in front of the Clerks' Table, thus in front of the Speaker, failed to bow and pay due respect to the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would request you to ask the Minister to apologize to this House.

Speaker: The hon. –

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, in response to that, I do want to apologize to the House.

I was accepting a phone call from the federal minister of energy. It was a timed call. Due to the extenuating circumstances of the motion that was on the floor, I had planned to step out prior to that, however – and again, I offer my apologies and I can assure you it won't happen again.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister. Yes, and I did witness it myself, hon. minister.

Ms. Biggar: Again, I apologize.

Speaker: I just remind everybody that the use of cell phones and other devices is not allowed on the floor of the Legislature.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. McIsaac: Might I recognize a few guests?

Speaker: Go ahead.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (II)

Mr. McIsaac: Might I recognize a few guests before introducing –

Speaker: Yes, go ahead.

Mr. McIsaac: I'd like to recognize Tony Wallbank and Kevin Taylor, new Islander over there, and also Mike Redmond, leader of the NDP's been with us this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance that the 1st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Just before we carry on with business, the hon. Minister of Finance has asked for recognition, I guess, so go ahead, hon. minister.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to recognize Tony Wallbank and Kevin Taylor in the House

tonight, and I'd also like to recognize former Page Lydia Craig. She's here with her young daughter, Claire, to give her first view of the proceedings – sorry, her young sister, I apologize.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roach: I do welcome them into the House tonight and I'm sure that young Claire will learn a few things here tonight.

An Hon. Member: She already did.

Mr. Roach: Yeah!

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 1st order of the day be now called

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Order No. 1, Consideration of the Capital Estimates, in Committee.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker?

Speaker: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, that Bill No. 24, *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2016*, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time, this day – is this the appropriation act you're talking about here?

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Trivers: Oh, pardon me, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my motion.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of

Finance, that this House now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the grant of capital supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

We'll call upon the Deputy Speaker to please take the chair.

Chair (Gallant): This House is now in the Committee of the Whole House to consider the grant of capital supply to Her Majesty. Will everybody please turn to page five?

Mr. Roach: Yes. Mr. Chair, I'd like to have one of my staff members sit on the floor with me here, Jim Miles.

Chair: Everybody in favour? Agreed.

Mr. Miles would you just like to introduce yourself for the Hansard, please?

Jim Miles Secretary: Jim Miles, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Board.

Chair: Thank you very much.

On page five we'll be reading 2016-2017 Budget Estimate.

Agriculture and Fisheries: nil. Communities, Land and Environment: 250,000. Education, Early Learning and Culture: 15,201,000. Family and Human Services: 750,000. Finance: 9,231,000. Health PEI: 21,415,200. Justice and Public Safety: 355,000. Tourism PEI: 750,000. Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: 29,934,000. Total Capital Expenditure: 77,895,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Question, the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I know that the budget for the transportation, infrastructure and energy is almost 50% of what we spent this year. I brought this up yesterday in my remarks to the finance minister's speech. Given that climate change is not just theoretical now, it's with us, and the extra expenditures this fiscal year on repairing the bridges, particularly up west, is it reasonable to think that we can spend half as much this year? And not just this year, but if you look on the previous page in the next four years

there's a flat line when you look at the funding to transportation, infrastructure and renewal. Is it reasonable to imagine there will not be another event sometime in the future that will bump up that estimate?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to respond to that. A lot of the work that is in this particular capital budget is to complete what's there and to replace some other work as well.

You're rightly correct, hon. member, we never know when these events are going to occur. Ideally, yes, if it was an endless amount of money to budget and to continue on, but we do have a capital plan that does go out, as you say, over five years. Some of those expenditures are in there for particular projects, and I can expand on that if you – including equipment that we need to buy, as indicated there, to plan for equipment that may be needed to handle any heavy snowfall events as well and to replace our fleet that's needed.

We do have the bridges planned there and provincial paving is under there as well, but you'll see the biggest part of that is the National Collector Highway Program which we will be doing a number of the projects under that once we go out and discuss the projects with the communities that are involved.

Again, as you say, we never know. The over budget that we had on there was a result of an unplanned event that happened. We will be very cognizant, of course, in that and your point is certainly taken, but – living within our means of what we can plan for in the future, we continue to look at those requirements to continue and get on a plan that we can replace things as we go. As we go and do replace things like the Cascumpec Bridge, we are raising the height on bridges, and taking into account future requirements when we do those capital projects so that we do plan for the future and those kinds of weather events.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Is there anything in the budget there for armouring? As potential sea level rises occur on Prince Edward Island, I'm thinking particular of the waterfront here in Charlottetown and the rather large assets that the government owns on the waterfront there.

Ms. Biggar: Actually not under this department, no.

Chair: Shall the budget carry? Carried.

All right.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and the Chair make report to Mr. Speaker.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a 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 resolutions I am directed to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive same.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the report of the committee be received.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Chair: Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee be now adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, that Motion No. 24 be recalled for debate.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors.

Ms. Mundy: Sorry. Still managing that learning curve here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure this evening to arise for the third time, and hopefully final time, to speak to the motion on creativity and innovation for all learners.

As I'd stated the other night, this is something that touches very close to home to me. I have three children that have completed their education within our educational system and I had two daughters that excelled academically in the education system. However, I did have one son that struggled from the moment he entered the school system. He would hear things – and his teachers were frustrated as well, because we would hear from the teachers things like: He's creative, he's a critical thinker, he's a hands-on learner, he's compassionate, he has empathy. You'd also hear things like: We don't know what to do with him. If he was in a different school system, he would thrive.

So for eight years we struggled as a family and I saw my son's self esteem and confidence in himself lower and lower.

However, we had a glimmer of hope in grade 9. We had a wonderful resource teacher by the name of Margie Cain – I want to give her some credit here tonight – who saw that. She saw the light in my son's eyes. She went back through his records and she saw the things that the teachers in the past had written about my son.

She decided to, I guess, recruit a couple of the other resource teachers and see if they could do something different. She had worked in school systems all over the world and she saw how adaptive learning or creativity and innovation could play a part in a child's life. She took my son aside and sat down with him and tried to find out things that interested him.

My son is very artistic and he has a great musical ability. At age eight he was playing bagpipes, at 10 he was playing a drum kit, and at 11 he was playing guitar. She knew that it's not that he was slow, so to speak, or that he had a learning disability. It's just that he needed something on the more creative side.

She worked with the other two teachers and – I can still remember the first book report. She asked my son: What would you like to read? Rather than what was prescribed for them to read. Since he had an interest in music she gave him a challenge and she said: This is your assignment. You need to go down to the library and you need to take out a library card. You need to do this yourself. This is part of your assignment. You need to read this book on John Lennon and you need to write a book report.

So he did that. And who would have known that my son was a creative writer as well as a talented musician? Grade 9 was a joy to our family. They continued that line of teaching and educating my son and he did thrive, winning awards at the end of the year.

I guess the way I look at it, my son is a perfect example of the child that this new motion will help. It will keep them from falling through the cracks because I'm sure many children are like my son and they did fall through the cracks. It excites me and it warms my heart that we have this motion and I'm so pleased to support it.

I also wanted to mention that I had the great fortune yesterday morning to attend an entrepreneur forum that was put on by CBDC Central PEI. The topic was: Youth of our future. It was all about cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit at a young age. We had a great panel of speakers there. It was good to see people from Innovation PEI there. The mayor of Summerside, Bill Martin, was there. He was the keynote speaker, who was also an entrepreneur, small business owner, very successful small business owner. Meghan Blanchard was there. She's a businesswoman in her own right and an entrepreneur. As well as Patrick Ledwell.

They spoke on having that culture and having that entrepreneurial spark and that it was somebody that ignited that spark within them. Patrick Ledwell spoke very eloquently about all through his life he was told he had to go to school, find a job, and that's what life was all about. He did that and was very successful at that. He had a great job with benefits and dental benefits and a pension plan, but one day he was asked – or, no, sorry, he decided just to up and quit his job with his pension and his benefits and his

dental plan. When he was asked why he did it, he said: What's the sense of waking up every day and having dental benefits if you're not happy and you can't smile?

That was the cue to him that it was more than just having a good job and getting that education. It was about being an entrepreneur. That's what he wanted to do. He gave it all up and went out and sought his fame and fortune. He's doing quite well as an entrepreneur, as a performer as well.

But again, going back, it was that entrepreneurial spark. I guess that, again, goes to this creativity and innovation motion.

I hope that entrepreneurial spirit or that entrepreneurial culture can be part of something that's taught in the classroom. Because what was blatantly obvious at this forum yesterday was that there were no youth there. There was probably 50 to 55 people there, all entrepreneurs, all wanting to engage with the youth, but the youth weren't there. When I spoke with the organizer of the event and asked where were the youth he said: We were expecting them but they didn't come. They approached these schools and the schools didn't feel it was something that was part of the curriculum.

It's my hope that this creativity and innovation for all learners motion will engage the education system into maybe taking the children out of the classroom at times and immersing them in the entrepreneurial culture as well. Because it was a shame that there were so many people there just waiting to speak to the youth and encourage them to go out and be all they can be, but they weren't there.

A wise man once said that the seeds of entrepreneurial spirit have to be planted early, so it's my hope that through this creativity and learning motion we can be planting those seeds at a very early age.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I am very pleased to support this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to support the motion, and everything that the hon. member has said, I would most definitely confer with. As going through high school myself, education didn't seem to play a large part in my role as opposed to I was more sports oriented. As you become older and you look back upon your days and you think of your past and some of your friends, and what you could have done, it's always good to look back, but it bugs you sometimes. So when you see kids today and especially the youth – I became very involved in youth in many different aspects and programs in trying to encourage them to take risks and become entrepreneurs, focus themselves on something that they want to do.

When I was growing up, I'll tell you, we were always told that working for government was always something that you should do because of the security around government, but as you become older and you go through those stages, sometimes government takes away some of those entrepreneurial and thinking outside of the box and being creative, as Tina has said.

I believe that creativity is a source of innovation, obviously, and to build one's mind I think – structure. We talked about it here not too long ago about how different associations are so structured, whether it be minor hockey or minor ball and kids don't have time. You can drive down the street anywhere in any subdivision on PEI and you never see kids out playing street hockey, but 20 years ago a lot of the kids were out playing street hockey.

We really non-capitalize on what we have at our hand in our youth. Talking about – I was at an export thing today and –

Ms. Casey: Charlottetown-Lewis Point.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes, and there were some small businesses there with some youth working in it, and boy oh boy, I'll tell you, they were enthused. They were actually pulling you into the booth to talk to you about their business.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I support this motion.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: By the way, hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, your name was on my list.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) old list.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

“I saw them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town,
With a yo-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
They sprung a beam,
And a side wall fell.

“I said to the foreman standing there” –

Mr. Myers: Too bad you (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: – “Are these men skilled?
And the kind you'd hire
If you wanted to build?”

Mr. Myers: Too bad you couldn't follow through with the deal you made with us.

Mr. McIsaac: “He gave me a laugh and said, ‘No, indeed! Just common labour is all I need!’”

Mr. Myers: Too bad you (Indistinct) earlier.

Mr. McIsaac: ““For I can wreck in a day or two
What has taken builders years to do.””

“I thought to myself as I walked away,
‘Which of these roles am I trying to play?
Am I a builder, building with care’” –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)!

Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. McIsaac: ““Planning my work with rule and square,
Or am I just a wrecker roaming around.
Content with the labour of tearing down?””

Mr. Speaker, I think this is what we're trying to develop and encourage and grow in our education system.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: Each of our students to get the very best out of them.

One of the things – I know the Premier mentioned it earlier on as well – the 4H program that really encourages and impresses upon the creativity, involvement, teamwork, all these things, the public speaking role of it as well.

I think, even through the school system with the external credentialing, you can get a credit for taking the 4H program. I think this is absolutely fantastic. I think all of us who have been involved with the 4H program know the great benefits and the skills you gain by –

Mr. Myers: Is honesty one of the (Indistinct)?

Mr. McIsaac: – taking that program.

Speaker: Order, please, hon. member!

All I ask is let's have some respect in this House. That's the least that I'm asking everybody, respect one another. If you don't respect one another you don't respect yourself. Now let's have some respect.

Go ahead, hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

This is one of the things that they will teach you in 4H too, is parliamentary procedure, that you have your chance to speak and you have a chance to debate –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: You have a chance to debate it, but you know what? It's parliamentary procedure. It's so many things. They ask you to take on a project for the year and the idea behind that project is that you will finish that project and you will get your credit for that and now you'll get your credit in the 4H system. Now you can get a credit as well through the external credentialing system in the educational system.

It builds our young people. It grows our young people in an ability to speak in public, but it also confirms the fact that you take on a project, you fill it through, and this is what's so great about the 4H program and about what we're trying to stimulate within our educational system. It's a fantastic program. I think it's great that we work with our people and try to grow them in so many ways, but teach them to tackle a project, see it through, and in the end you will get some credit for it.

I want to congratulate the education system and I want to congratulate our 4H program, too, that works so hard with so many of our youth. It used to be the 4H was cows and cooking, that's what they used to say, but now they say it's not all cows and cooking, it's so many different things. We have so many people from even in the urban areas that are involved with the 4H program. They see the benefits of taking that program, finishing the project through, and the great benefits you'll have. It actually grows our youth. I just think it's terrific that our school system is launching out in this way and actually making that tie between the 4H and other groups as well that work so hard to build our young people.

I fully support this motion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Is there anybody else who would like to speak to the motion?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to rise in support of this motion. I have to tell the House that I was very excited to hear the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture talk so glowingly about the importance of arts in our education system. It was music to my ears, if you will excuse the pun.

Creativity, of course, is a natural human urge. In my dental office I have an art easel in the corner and you can't stop the kids from coming in and drawing on it every time. However, sadly, as we grow older, that

sort of urge to express yourself seems to evaporate or get taken out of us, or whatever. I hardly ever see an adult in the corner picking up the crayons and drawing a picture and it's a darn shame because I think creativity is something which is an innate, human trait and something which is almost unique in the animal world. I think it's a shame that we don't express it in its fullness throughout our whole life.

Of course, we tend to think of the soft subjects in school, whether they be art or music, as fringe subjects and the sooner we get back to the real learning of math and science and all of that stuff the better. Well, we're starting to recognize that's not the case and that there is a real value and importance in teaching our children creativity and allowing them to express their individuality. That comes through the arts. Things like independent thinking and intuition, imagination, risk-taking – all of those things happen when you allow a child to unlock their potential and become creative. Not only is it a lovely thing for human beings to be able to express themselves, it's an enormously important thing for society as well.

The world has changed. There was a time when humanity was largely tasked with the brute force of work. Seventy per cent of society was typically engaged in agriculture, for example, not just here on Prince Edward Island, but around the world. Now we have a tiny percentage of that. A couple of percentages of the population produce all of our food. Even more recently, the mindful tasks that used to be done by human beings are being taken over by computers and robots and things like that

But the creativity is something that is not replaceable. We're finding that the real thinkers in our society, the ones that are the entrepreneurial drivers, the ones that are really moving our society forward, are those who are creative thinkers who think outside of the box, who aren't afraid of making mistakes, who are willing to do the things that only an opportunity from creative thinking presents itself. So we must not lose creativity in our schools.

The economy and the education system were built on an industrial model, that of efficiency and consistency and tight

perimeters and sticking to convention. Almost like a fast-food model. I know when I went through school everybody sat in the same classroom at the same time and did the same things, and that can be very stifling for some kids. Some kids manage fine in that atmosphere but for those who are perhaps a little different – and we're all different, my goodness, every single one of us is unique – that oppression can be quite stifling and it can stop a lot of young people from reaching their full potential.

I think creativity is the Red Bull of education. We talk about Red Bull giving you wings. Really, actually, it just gives you cavities and hypertension, but creativity really does give your mind wings. It gives your mind an opportunity to do something different and unique and something that's fitting to you.

I happen to think that here on Prince Edward Island we have a tremendous potential to infuse creativity into our education system. I think this is a wonderful first step, but I think we could do much more. Here on Prince Edward Island small is indeed beautiful and we're nimble and we're maneuverable and we could do things, whether it's in the education system or any other part of life here on Prince Edward Island, in a way that some jurisdictions are not able.

The education system here, I think, could be an emblem of the excellence and the willingness to do things differently that Prince Edward Island can show the rest of the world.

I stand in absolute support of this motion. I wish there were more creativity in arts and music and drama in our schools. I appreciate, for one, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries' poetry on the floor. I think we don't see enough of that. Obviously didn't sit well with everybody's ears in this House but I was happy to hear it and I thank you for that, minister.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as well, it's a pleasure to speak.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Is there any other member that would like to speak to the motion?

If not, we will go back to the mover, the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture to close debate on the motion.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank everyone who spoke on this motion. I do want to thank the Member of Agriculture and Fisheries for bringing up 4-H. I'll not go into a two-hour talk on 4-H and the importance of it, but it is a very – it's the largest rural youth organization in North America and their motto is, Learn To Do By Doing. So it does fit in well. I'm glad he mentioned that.

In my moving of this motion I spoke a lot about how creativity and innovation are important to our high school students and that they have these skills when they graduate. But for the next steps I think it's also important that we start early learners.

We have a play-based curriculum in kindergarten and we've added new pieces to our curriculum. From this point forward all curriculum documents will contain information on how creativity and innovation can be worked into the K-9 curriculum. Our approach for the education of all our learners is one that highlights and values creativity and innovation for all ages. All students have the ability to be creative.

I spent the last few months visiting Island schools and I'm very excited to do some more of these visits. In these schools I've heard from teachers and principals and they tell me about their challenges, but they tell me about the joy of their profession. The common denominator in every school I've been to so far is that I'm always amazed at the work being done by teachers within these schools. Tip-to-tip, teachers are doing great work in supporting students and taking innovative approaches to teaching our curriculum.

I saw a great example of this just in my own riding at the elementary school in Tignish. They participate in the Art Smarts Program and it was a great example of using innovation and creativity to link different parts of the curriculum involving artists from the community. They engaged Maurice Bernard to help create murals to speak to the history and to the culture of the western part of Prince Edward Island and it was a great

way to link art, history, and community together.

If you ever have the opportunity to visit Tignish, drop into the Tignish Elementary School and you will be amazed at the wall that they have in their library. The principal wanted to do something with the library a few years ago. It was kind of just a place where nobody really went to, it was a dark room. He put out a survey in the school and had the students create a wish list on it and they wanted to do some creative painting in that library. They also wanted some couches and make it a very inviting and welcoming area for them. It was great that they also had the input into it.

The principal had Maurice Bernard lead this project and he listened to the ideas. He had the kids come in and talk to him about what some of the highlights were in the Tignish and surrounding areas and what was important to them, what makes this their community. Every week he would go up and he'd paint a little bit and the kids would rush in the next day to see what he painted. It was very exciting times for the students. What he painted was different buildings that were in the community – the post office, the church and such. Some of the surrounding communities, Skinners Pond, Nail Pond, Sea Cow Pond, the harbours that are very important to our area. North Cape, especially with the wind energy site, local fields with farmers in the fields, sheep were in the fields. He painted seagulls. Kids would come in and they'd have to find all these little – whether they'd be basketballs, or like I said, seagulls, or even sheep, kind of strategically placed into the mural. They always had something to do and something to find.

Because that was such a great success, the next year they applied to the Arts Smarts Program for a mosaic for another wall in the school. You really have to go in to see this. It reflects all the wildlife on PEI. They just didn't use traditional paint on canvas, they were very creative in what they applied to it. I'm sure there are great things like this happening in other schools right across Prince Edward Island.

I'd like to take this moment and I'm sure members will agree with me, to collectively

thank our teachers for their continued dedication to Island students.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Perry: As a province, if we are truly to help our learners, we must draw on the shared knowledge, experience, and expertise of our teachers. We need to build new partnerships among parents, educators, community leaders, and government to ensure that every student has an opportunity to fulfill his or her own potential. I know that we come together with a shared sense of purpose to make real improvement in student learning and achievement.

Working together we can give Island children the best possible start to their future. We are committed to expanding school technology so students have access to the best learning opportunities. We are committed to expanding school technology so students have access to the best learning opportunities. We are committed to supporting educators as they deal with the changing nature of Island classrooms and we are committed to providing stable and sustainable supports for our frontline educators and administrators.

Teaching creativity and innovation will be integral to supporting student excellence. As we work through our plans for increasing engagement and improving student achievement, I want to make sure that all teachers know that they are crucial to the success of our students. The fundamental purpose of creativity and innovation is to develop a mindset with our students in which creative problem-solving is simply a way of approaching life. It's just the way they think.

Sometimes the creative process is about asking the right questions, not about finding the right answer. Creativity can be cultivated if students are learning in a setting where they are not afraid to suggest alternative ideas and take risks. It was my hope that all Island teachers are working towards a classroom environment where students feel supported in taking risks, asking questions, and suggesting alternative ideas.

This environment must be flexible. There must be time for reflection, for exploration, for experimentation, for revising and for

refining, and for showing their work to teachers, parents, and other audiences.

Students should be encouraged at any age to experiment with materials, tools, and techniques. They should be given opportunities to explore ideas and concepts. They should be encouraged to be creative and innovative in all subject areas at all ages.

I know that this is currently taking place in many Island classrooms today, and we'll be moving towards an environment where creativity and innovation is the norm, not the exception.

It is my hope that the new principals' council can provide some advice on how we can incorporate this vision into the classroom. All Island principals will be invited to participate in this new PEI principals' council. This group will directly influence policy and program decisions in the K-12 school system.

Principals provide educational leadership and have a significant influence on student achievement. I hope that principals can help us move towards a mindset where creative approaches are fundamental to all learners from the early years, through formal schooling and beyond.

I hope that all Islanders will support a creative and innovative approach to our curriculum. One of the things that I'm most excited about on our new district advisory councils, and that's for the first time ever we will have a student voice in these councils. Each council will have student representatives from local high schools.

I have a quote here from Charting the Way, the report on PEI Education Governance Commission: Youth have a unique perspective and important things to say. They are highly capable of making a valuable contribution to education governance. The voice of youth needs to be heard on an ongoing basis. Students are the reason the system exists.

The new family of schools advisory councils will give students and parents great opportunity to provide meaningful advice on the K-12 education system directly to the Department of Education, Early Learning

and Culture. They will be comprised of high school students, student council, home and school association representatives, and the regional representative of the home and school federation.

I'm hoping that students on these councils will speak about their experiences with creativity and innovation in our curriculum and how it can expand throughout our education system.

I hope those in this Legislative Assembly will also support and encourage steps to foster creativity and innovation in all our learners, from the early years to post-secondary and beyond.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are we ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question!

Speaker: All those voting in favour of the motion, say "yea".

Some Hon. Members: Yea!

Speaker: All those voting against the motion, say "nay".

Motion is carried and it is unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness that Motion 22 be now called.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Motion No. 22.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Summerside-St. Eleanors, the following motion:

WHEREAS in January of this year the province launched the Prince Edward Island

wellness strategy, based on input from many Islanders;

AND WHEREAS the strategy focuses on five goals: physical activity, healthy eating, mental wellness, living tobacco free and consuming alcohol responsibly;

AND WHEREAS screening programs and healthy living are the best ways to prevent, reduce and manage chronic disease, which is our biggest health challenge on Prince Edward Island;

AND WHEREAS government has invested in many wellness initiatives from healthy eating and activity programs in schools, to boardwalks and bike lanes, positive parenting programs, go! PEI, smoking cessation programs and seniors physical activity initiatives;

AND WHEREAS government is committed to an increased emphasis on wellness and disease prevention;

AND WHEREAS everyone has a role to play in building a culture of wellness, and it is not something governments can do alone;

AND WHEREAS initiatives developed by NGOs, municipalities and community groups are the best ways to engage Islanders and help them build wellness into their daily lives;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of this Assembly encourage Islanders and communities to participate in the wellness strategy and the further development of a culture of wellness in Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll call on the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human services to move the motion.

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

Before I get started, could I have your indulgence to recognize a couple of guests in the gallery?

Speaker: Go ahead, hon. minister.

Mr. Currie: I just want to recognize – I see Jeff Matheson in the gallery this evening. Jeff's been a very big advocate for stronger supports for children in the area of physical medicine so I wanted to acknowledge Jeff being in tonight. Also with him is the leader of the NDP. Mike Redmond is with us tonight as well. Mike is, speaking of this motion, a big proponent of youth and activity and doing some great stuff with his (Indistinct) friends in the community. I just want to acknowledge that.

Mr. Speaker, today I am very pleased to move this motion on encouraging a culture of wellness in Prince Edward Island.

There's a great deal we can do in our health system to help Islanders stay healthy and well, as there is much we can do in individuals and communities to build a culture of wellness in our province. We can have a far greater impact.

One of our biggest health challenges on the Island is the chronic disease such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes which can often be prevented and reduced. In the health system we have some excellent chronic disease programs that help manage people and their illnesses. For example, COPD programs offer education and self-management skills to help Islanders prevent the onset and complications of COPD, which is the leading condition for hospital visits and length of stay.

Since 2012 over 1,500 people have benefitted from this program. Our diabetes program helps people with diabetes to maintain and enhance their quality of life. Over the past three years over 7,700 Islanders have participated in the diabetes program, including 4,100 since September of 2014.

Through our hypertension program, Islanders receive educational tools to monitor and control high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke and other illnesses. More and more Islanders are participating in screening programs that detect conditions early and help Islanders to reduce and manage chronic disease.

For example, between 2011 and 2013 more than 8,000 Islanders were screened for

colorectal cancer and that number continues to grow. Thousands of Islanders participate in mammography screening each year. PEI has one of the highest participation rates in the country for Pap tests and cervical cancer screening.

One of our most powerful prevention programs is our excellent childhood immunization program. Thousands of Islanders will get the flu shot this year and in turn they will avoid becoming ill, spreading the virus, and developing complications from the flu which can be quite serious, especially for seniors.

New mental health and addictions programming is making a real difference in the lives of Islanders. For example, our youth addictions programs are giving many youth a better chance in life and our methadone clinics are helping hundreds of Islanders to get their lives back.

Our community-based health organizations have been leaders in wellness and health promotion for many years and they continue to make an invaluable contribution to wellness. Our NGOs are out there in Island communities every day as staff and volunteers raising funds for research, providing education programs supporting people who are ill, and advocating for more supports.

We are pleased to provide financial support to many of these organizations and to partner with them in programs that engage Islanders in wellness.

There are many things we can do as individuals to reduce the risk of chronic disease when we have the right opportunities and supports. In January of this year we launched a provincial wellness strategy that is now providing Islanders with more opportunities to improve their physical and mental health.

The strategy is based on input from Islanders in five key areas: physical activity, mental wellness, living tobacco-free, eating well, and consuming alcohol responsibly. The core of the strategy is about taking small steps to better health and working together to build a culture of wellness.

Government is taking a leadership role in helping Islanders to be well. Whether it's our investments in bike lanes and boardwalks, smoking cessation programs, exercise programs for seniors, our healthy eating programs in our schools, we have partnered on a number of wellness initiatives that are now seeing positive results.

Encouraging community-led initiatives is an important part of the wellness strategy as we had an overwhelming response to the \$100,000 wellness grant fund we introduced this spring. Over 200 non-government organizations, communities, post-secondary institutions, home and school associations and community groups submitted innovative projects to address the five priorities of the strategy. Twenty-six grants were awarded and I want to highlight a few to show the breadth and diversity of the projects.

Over the summer the Adventure Group held nine sessions for 100 youth on active living, healthy eating, drinking responsibly, mental health, and living tobacco-free. The Brain Injury Association received a grant to provide brain injury survivors with chair yoga and aqua-fit opportunities. The Canadian Mental Health Association offered a 12-week course for seniors to help them react to challenges in their lives. The East Prince Community Coalition established a mom-to-mom breastfeeding support group to promote the Breastfeeding-Friendly designation.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation received help with its online Sugary Drink Challenge, as well as a grant to engage stroke survivors in physical activity through dance and movement. The UPEI Psychology Department received help to create a theatre troupe in West Prince to provide mothers of young children with strategies to deal with challenging situations. The Holland College Food Bank received support to offer Lunch and Learn sessions for students on buying and preparing whole foods on a budget.

The Inner City Life Skills Inc. offered a summer day camp for children aged seven to 12 years on food literacy, sports skills, and positive coping skills. The Native Council was supported to offer workshops on how to eat traditional and healthy foods, and lead a healthy life. The Newcomers Association project offered refugee and immigrant-youth

weekly opportunities to eat healthy, and increase their confidence and mental health awareness.

The Community Food Mentor Program received help to increase community food security through information on food skills, healthy eating practices and local food sourcing. The PEI Home and School Federation was awarded a grant to offer information sessions on mental health and mental illness in all families of schools. A Recreation PEI project aimed to recruit champions from eight communities to lead walking clubs and remove barriers associated with weather and accessibility.

The Seniors College received a wellness grant to offer courses on physical activity, healthy eating and mental health. The UPEI Student Union was awarded a grant to offer community kitchens where students and staff come together once a month to create a meal and learn healthy and cost-effective recipes.

We commend the groups for their excellent ideas and for engaging thousands of Islanders in wellness activities. When we look back just a few years, it is amazing to see how far we've come in terms of what we know about wellness and the opportunities we have to be healthy and well. While there is much more to do, we do have much to build on.

I want to recognize the GoPEI initiatives that have become really popular in all areas of the Province of Prince Edward Island and we see our numbers growing consistently. We are very pleased with the outcomes of the strategy in its first year. We are optimistic about what we can achieve as we go forward. I encourage all members of this Assembly to encourage Islanders to participate in the wellness strategy and the further development of a wellness culture in Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to second this motion.

It is a very important motion because our health is our most precious resource and while there are some things we can't control when it comes to our health, there are many things we can control.

As Minister Currie said –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Ms. Mundy: Sorry. If we have a culture that embraces and supports wellness we have a much greater chance to be healthy, happy and productive members of society.

Mr. Aylward: (Indistinct).

Ms. Mundy: I agree with the minister's comments about how far we've come in terms of taking more responsibility for our own health.

In Summerside you can go out most any time of the day and find people walking the boardwalk, taking part in activities at Credit Union Place or enjoying the trails that surround the city. The city of Summerside also boasts 125 acres of green space, 19 kilometres of walking trails, and seven kilometres of waterfront boardwalks, all available to the public. They are also proud to host over 120 grassroots minor sports tournaments per year.

The Credit Union Place, or what I commonly refer to as the jewel of Prince Edward Island, has been instrumental in creating wellness opportunities for Summerside and the surrounding areas. Fitness memberships average 1,500 per year. The aquatic centre sees about 77,600 users per year. The walking track averages about 46,500 users and is free of charge, I might add, and finally, on average there are about 28,600 bowling games played per year as well. These numbers speak volumes to the dedicated staff at Credit Union Place and their efforts to cultivate wellness opportunities in our community.

Many of these people may have been sitting home just a few years ago and would never have imagined they would be so active today and enjoy it so much. All levels of government are to be commended for the infrastructure we now have in Island communities that enable us to get out and be active. Our community-based organizations

should also be recognized for the great things they do to promote physical and mental wellness.

For example, in my community, Summerside-St. Eleanors, the Boys and Girls Club plays a very important role. For many years it has helped youth develop a positive focus and healthy habits that last a lifetime. The Summerside Boys and Girls Club has such programs as the Cool Moves Program which stresses the importance of eating healthy and recreation. Like most programs at the Boys and Girls Club they provide this free of charge and there is free admission to all social activities at Credit Union Place. It is of the utmost importance that we eliminate any barriers that could prevent our youth from participating in activities geared towards their overall wellness.

The Boys and Girls Club breakfast program has not only served over 25,000 breakfasts to Summerside youth, but it empowers club members on how to choose and prepare a healthy breakfast, which is a necessity in our daily diets. They also have Project Backpack and it's another very successful program which promotes healthy eating habits and overall wellness. All week long club members fill backpacks with ingredients, ideas, and instruction on preparing nutritional meals for their entire family.

Last but not least, I am also pleased to report that the Boys and Girls Club of Summerside is currently putting the finishing touches on a new youth engagement centre that will host wellness related programs targeted at youth aged 13 through 19.

Generation X Inc. in Summerside is another one of our jewels. It focuses on physical activity, fair play, and person-to-person interaction. They are 100% screen free, which means they do not allow cell phones or gaming systems inside the centre. They operate an indoor skate park, a supervised after-school program, an archery program, and a creative kitchen program. The goal of the creative kitchen program is to educate children and youth about the joys of growing and cooking from scratch, with the overall goal of health and well-being of the current and future generations.

The program has four components to it: planting, maintaining, and harvesting fruits and vegetables in a community garden setting; preparing, cooking and storing the harvested fruits and vegetables and creating meal plans for the off-season; cooking lessons in the evenings during the school year and on afternoons in the summer months; and finally, educating children and youth on the importance of organic practices and the health and economic benefits of having your own garden.

It's programs like these that need to be showcased and explained across the Island. It is crucial that young Islanders learn about the food they are consuming.

Our schools also play a powerful role in wellness. Students spend a large part of their young lives at school and it is encouraging to see the growing number of school-based programs that help them learn how to be healthy and take steps toward a healthy lifestyle. Many schools have breakfast and snack programs and they are offering more nutritious menus in cafeterias and more healthy choices. Our teachers and students are talking more about mental health, about bullying and other issues that have a real impact on our youth. They are encouraging students to stand up for each other as a local school community.

School athletics are still an important part of school life, but it is encouraging to see a growing emphasis on physical activity for all students before, during, and after school, activities that don't begin and end with physical education class. By providing more opportunities for all students to get active, schools are enabling them to develop skills and confidence that they will draw on throughout their entire lives.

While we are making great strides in wellness we have several new challenges to address. One that I see as a parent is the pressure that social media is putting on our young people. They are feeling too connected to their phones and they are feeling very pressured to keep up with what others are doing and saying on social media platforms.

I'm also concerned about the time stress that families are feeling, particularly women who are working full-time raising children and

often caring for aging parents at the same time. Another area where we have to do better is in childhood obesity which is growing at an alarming rate and has far-reaching implications.

For these reasons I am encouraged by our health system's commitment to an increased emphasis on wellness and by the successes we are having and achieving in communities to build wellness into our daily lives.

I look forward to continued success with the wellness strategy and I, too, encourage members and all Islanders to be part of the wellness culture that is taking shape in Prince Edward Island today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise in support of the motion this evening. It's quite important that we all live our lives in a healthy manner and eat correct food and partake in some sports and it's important that we encourage others to do that as well.

Earlier this evening I had the opportunity to represent the government at the opening of our early bird minor hockey tournament out in Sherwood at the Cody Banks Arena. The rink was full of young hockey players and young families all partaking in this hockey tournament that is well known in our community for years and years. Everybody is so excited to be a part of the tournament and be part of a team. You got the sense that they're really enjoying it. They were very active and having a lot of fun.

As I spoke to one of the parents of one of the young hockey players, he told me that this is pretty much a regular weekend routine for him and his family. He has three young sons playing tournaments all over, not only PEI, but the Maritimes. It's something that they attend to all winter long. He says that the children just love it.

Not only are hockey and sports in general

good for your physical health, but being part of a team and being part of learning how to cooperate with others is so important for your mental health as well. I think there's no better way for children to stay active and healthy than through sport, especially this time of year the sport of hockey.

Even as I was leaving the arena to return back down to the Legislature tonight there was another group of young children out there playing ball hockey. Even though they get off the ice, off outside they go and grab their sticks and a ball and continue on late into the evening.

Very pleased to stand and support this motion. I appreciate the minister for bringing it forward and I know it will probably fully supported by all Members of the Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, can I have the podium, please?

Speaker: Yes you can, hon. member.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Encouraging a culture of wellness is important and I commend the government for this wellness strategy. I'm very fortunate that as a young girl growing up my parents fostered a wellness culture in our family. My earliest memories of sport are in elementary school where we did intramurals and after-school programs in a town that had a big involvement in sport. I think everybody played sport. It didn't cost a lot of money, we couldn't afford to do that, but I think everybody I knew was involved in sport in my town and I thank my parents for allowing us. My earliest memory is playing soccer. I played that sport right up to university and played for a university, coached, and also went on to play at the seniors' women's level.

To this day I'm still pleased to tell you the Hockey Mamas have been on the ice twice this year and this is our 13th season. I'm still

donning the skates on Monday nights and sometimes Sunday mornings as well. I think it's important for parents to start at a young age and have their children involved in activities.

The encouragement I received from my parents at sport followed me through my life, encouraged me to actually go to on to university and study sport, and did a bachelor of science in physical education and have a teaching degree from St. Francis Xavier University.

I'd like to commend the recreation departments in our province. You don't have to have a whole of money to participate in sport, you can walk. A shout-out to all the recreation departments across the Island who really get families involved and promote programs in their communities.

I know the community that I live in, the suburb of Charlottetown and the community of West Royalty, had programs from children with their Mommy and Me Program right through to seniors' fitness activities. Rick Callaghan, a volunteer out in the community of West Royalty, is still coaching a youth basketball program and he's been doing that for over 30 years and bringing up our next generation of basketball players in this province. A lot of the kids who have gone through that minor basketball program have gone on to play university ball and I'm proud to say a lot of the kids have received their start in the Rick Callaghan program here in the Charlottetown area.

If you learn about a culture or you learn about wellness at young age it fosters good health as you move on in life, keeps you away from chronic diseases, and it just fosters a culture of wellness. It's important as well – the minister mentioned about screening programs and healthy living. Everyone has a role to play in this wellness strategy and I hope that everybody will go out and encourage their children and their neighbours to get active and become part of this movement on Prince Edward Island to make us one of the fittest and most healthiest communities in the country.

I'm pleased to stand and support this motion and commend the minister and his department for promoting it.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Is there any other members who would like to speak to the motion?

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I won't keep you long. I'm rising, of course, to speak in favour of this motion. I think it's important that we talk about health care all the time, but the World Health Organization's definition of health is not about taking care of us when we're sick, it's about a complete state of physical, social, and mental well-being and that's what we need to be looking for and that's what wellness is all about.

I would like to point out that currently we only spend one-third of 1% of the health budget on preventative health and I think that's something that this government needs to look at. Of course, I'm happy that 100,000 was put aside this year for wellness initiatives, but that's an incredibly small amount of money for something as important as this.

While I welcome this, I really hope this is the start of something bigger because wellness is incredibly important in our society. Having listened to a few members on the government side give their valuable endorsement of this motion, I hope that will be reciprocated when I bring forward my well-being measurement act over the next little while because it's talking about exactly these sorts of things and how important they are to Islanders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I just want to follow up on the comments from the Leader of the Third Party.

I think his comments were very appropriate there. We're talking about mental well-being

as well. When we talk about this whole wellness idea it just brings me back a little bit to my youth, I guess. My dad was a sergeant major in WWII, the air force, and he was dedicated to exercising, and he exercised about 80 out of the 81 years that he was with us and was fantastic at keeping in shape and encouraged that in his family as well, even though he had 10 children.

I'm one of six boys who grew up on the farm and we were – if you want to get in shape, that's the place to do it because you automatically got it without even trying. It's a lot of work, was a lot of work, and we all had our chores to do, but in the end we always kept in shape. I know, I'll say, when I milked cows for the 30 years there, that was the easiest way to keep in shape without even trying because there was a lot of labour to it, a lot of work, but it was absolutely fantastic for us.

I was able to play some sports and play some hockey in eastern Kings and Eastern Kings Oldtimers.

Not only that, the well-being part of it, too, in that had to do with the camaraderie and the teamwork, I think for sure. That certainly helped, working with people, teamwork, playing with people on the team and getting along like that. It certainly helps you grow in so many ways.

We had four boys of our own that went on to play sports and my youngest fellow played with the Panthers in basketball. The other fellows played some high school sports for sure, right into hockey and basketball and baseball. They all had their own little intricacies and interests, that is for sure, but it was great to keep them in shape. They had their chores on the farm when they were growing up and I think it all went to help their mental wellness as well. Because they are very stable young gentlemen in the world today and they still enjoy the sports and working at making sure they keep in shape.

I think, again, of the camaraderie and the teamwork and that sort of thing. When you're involved with teams like that it helps with the whole idea of mental wellness, cooperating and working with people.

I commend the minister for putting this motion forward. I think it's very timely, and

it's something that we all should take into full consideration on a daily basis.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion?

If not, we will go back to the mover to close debate on the motion.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services.

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

I appreciate the support and I think that all of us in the Assembly recognize the importance of fostering and promoting a culture of wellness in the Province of Prince Edward Island. We know, in our province, that it's a different time today than it was five, 10, 20 years ago. The world is a different place. I'm the father of two children and it's a constant issue because of the screen-time debate. Youth today are really engaged in technology and the more sedentary, and it's just – there's a lot of focus on structured sport in our communities across Prince Edward Island, and a lot of times you'll see parents picking up and dropping off – very structured. When we were younger, a lot of people in this Assembly, there was more sort of a natural activity when we left the house in the morning. We were kept busy and very active and very engaged.

I continue to put a lot of focus on my two girls on school sports, and I'd like to see us continue build and strengthen those opportunities. Both of my girls have had experiences this fall playing soccer, very busy and very active. Both of them play basketball so they are very busy and very active. It's something that we have to continue to pay close attention to. A lot of times I'm getting up in this Assembly and I'm talking about health care and I'm talking about sort of programs, expanding screening programs, programs to manage chronic disease in our communities and physical activity is a very cost-effective recipe for keeping our communities vibrant and healthy.

If you look at the increase in adolescent diabetes in the Province of Prince Edward Island, you'll see that those numbers are concerning. You see that those numbers are rising dramatically. If you look at the average weight of our 12-year-olds today compared to the average weight of what they were 20 years ago or 25 years ago, it's sending a very concerning message to us. It's a little unfortunate that we have to stand up and we have to promote wellness and activity. We know in the Province of Prince Edward Island we're spending substantial volumes of money to react and respond, whether it be in mental health and addictions, whether it being trying to manage chronic disease. Our baby boomers today are between 50 and 70. There's a lot of increased pressure on our health care budgets. We're seeing the trajectory of demand rising, and costs rising as well.

As government, how do we continue to try to manage and to be more progressive and aggressive in trying to respond? I think that we are making inroads, and I shared a little bit about the wellness strategy. We talked a little bit about the goPEI! initiatives and other community-based programs. I referred to the Leader of the NDP, Mike Redmond, who has got a very successful little activity-based program that engages kids in after-school programs, summer programming. We need to continue to foster that environment. It's going to be so important.

I think the member from Cornwall referred to 20 years ago it was very common to see street hockey games, ball games, going on. It's a different time today than it was and I think that we need to continue to start focusing back on making sure our children are very active.

I continue to focus on the public education system. I think we've got more opportunity as a province to continue to look at the length of our school days and looking at ways that we can find more activity. I know that we have a requirement of time-on-task. I think it's about five and a half hours of curriculum time per day. Discussions about maybe expanding that length of the school day to implement another 30 or 45 minutes of activity for our children in our public school systems. I think that as we continue to move forward we'll continue to need to

find innovative, effective ways to foster wellness.

We're very fortunate here in Prince Edward Island and we are very well taken care of in respect to the volumes of infrastructure that we have with our schools. We look at our turf fields and our facilities, whether it be in Cornwall, whether it be in Stratford, or whether it be in Charlottetown. If you look at the community of Crapaud with their wellness facility, if you look at Stratford – I think we've got lots of opportunity and I think that we need to continue to be very open. A lot of these facilities are municipally-owned and government-owned, and I think we need to continue to look at ways that we can open up those facilities that are owned by the taxpayers and look at ways that we can continue to promote and make these facilities more accessible, to continue to foster the culture of wellness.

I am very grateful for the support in the Assembly here this evening and I think that we've made some inroads, but I think that we're just starting to really get moving on the potential opportunity that we have to really embrace a culture of wellness here in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Members, are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question!

Speaker: All those voting in favour of the motion, say "yea."

Some Hon. Members: Yea!

Speaker: All those voting against the motion, say "nay."

The motion is carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: And it is unanimous.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services, that Motion No. 59 be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees: Motion No. 59.

The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, the following motion:

WHEREAS mental illness is a common illness that one in five Canadians experiences;

AND WHEREAS mental illness affects people of all ages, education and income levels, and cultures;

AND WHEREAS mental illness also affects family members, friends and co-workers;

AND WHEREAS many mental health problems begin in childhood and adolescence and can be addressed through appropriate diagnosis and care;

AND WHEREAS many seniors develop mental health problems when they become less connected with their family, friends and community;

AND WHEREAS almost half of sufferers never get help because for them, the stigma is so great that they cannot tell family and friends what they are going through;

AND WHEREAS treatment is more effective when the person who is suffering has the understanding and support of their family, friends and community;

AND WHEREAS we are making good strides in promoting mental wellness in our communities, workplaces, schools and post-secondary institutions;

AND WHEREAS employers are having a real impact on the well-being and productivity of employees by developing healthy workplaces, recognizing the signs of

mental illness, and helping employees get help;

AND WHEREAS teachers continue to make a real difference for students with mental health challenges, and schools continue to offer resources that promote mental wellness and support student needs;

AND WHEREAS community-based organizations are leaders in offering mental wellness initiatives, programs that help people get well, and initiatives that bring Islanders together to support each other;

AND WHEREAS while great progress is being made in reducing the stigma, there is much more to do and everyone has a role to play;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that members of this Assembly, community leaders, employers, educators, caregivers and all Islanders talk more about mental illness, reach out to those who may be suffering and encourage them to seek help through the growing number of programs and services offered across the Island.

Speaker: I will ask the mover, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services, to speak to the motion.

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

Before I get started, I had the opportunity last week to be in Ottawa and I had the opportunity to meet with Louise Bradley. Louise Bradley is the CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Commission of Canada. Those of you who have heard of and are familiar with the Canadian Mental Health Commission – they're a federally-funded organization that works with the provinces and territories on initiatives and strategies. They have presented a national mental health strategy.

I guess one of the messages that I have sent to Louise Bradley, as the minister of health for the Province of Prince Edward Island, is that – and all due respect to the work that they do – there needs to be a more deeper level of engagement with the provinces and the territories. They are a federally-funded organization and I feel that organization and the opportunities to continue to do some real

work and get down to the grassroots of what our health care systems and our communities are struggling with, are substantial and I think that with the changes in the federal government and the willingness, hopefully, by the mental health commission of this country, and their leadership, and federal, provincial and territorial ministers, that we'll finally see some changes in respect to some real action, which makes a difference as we represent and work on behalf of our constituents.

I do want to share that. It was a very productive discussion and I think there's a real appetite for the commission to be more engaged with the provinces and the territories, with the leadership of the federal government. We're hoping.

Today I am very pleased to move this motion on ending the stigma surrounding mental illness. Mental illness is a common illness that affects people of all ages, education and income levels and cultures. In fact, one in five Canadians experiences mental illness. Almost half of all sufferers never get help because for them the stigma is so great that they cannot tell family and friends what they are going through.

We all have a role to play in reducing the stigma. Talking openly about mental illness is one of the most important ways that we can do that, and I must add, we've come a long way. We are making good strides in promoting mental wellness in our communities, workplaces, schools and post-secondary institutions.

The Annual Bell Let's Talk Campaign, for example, has helped to get Canadians talking and is promoting awareness, understanding about mental illness and using social media to continue to get their message out. Many celebrities and Canadian icons have come forward as spokespersons to talk about their own struggles with mental illness. The conversations and events at the community level are playing a huge role in reducing the stigma, encouraging people to reach out to those suffering from mental illness and to get help themselves.

The University of Prince Edward Island has an annual Mental Health Week, among other initiatives, to raise awareness and reduce stigma. UPEI Mental Health Week

recognizes that it's important to work together to improve awareness and to ensure resources are available on campus for students, staff and faculty affected by mental illness and giving them the supports and the direction they need to get the help when it's needed.

Examples of this support at UPEI include a free, 24/7 student support program and a Student Union Mental Health Initiatives Fund, which is used to raise awareness and help address issues of mental health through projects such as conferences, peer support groups, speaker series, research projects, workshops and training sessions.

The PEI RCMP is also helping to reduce stigma. During a national Mental Illness Awareness Week this fall, the RCMP in Charlottetown lit up their office in purple, the color symbolizing recovery, in recognition of the week. Messages were sent to RCMP employees about activities and approaches to improve mental health and to recognize those in need of assistance. RCMP employees are encouraged to talk openly about mental illness and this is the type of thing that will remove the stigma and make change.

The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health focuses on engaging Canadians in conversation about mental illness. Its annual awareness campaign centres on individuals who share their stories of living with mental illness. The campaign depends on grassroots organizations and ordinary Canadians to spread the word through social media and by distributing posters, brochures, and bookmarks that highlight the stories of these individuals.

The PEI Canadian Mental Health Association offers a mental illness education program called Changing Minds to address a community need for mental health education stigma reduction and increase public understanding of mental health and mental illness. We cannot underestimate the importance of reaching out to those affected by mental illness. We know that treatment is more effective when the person who is suffering has the understanding and support of their family, friends and community. Community-based organizations are leaders in offering mental wellness initiatives

programs that help people get well and initiatives that bring Islanders together to support each other.

While great progress is being made in reducing the stigma there is much more to do and everyone has a role to play. I encourage members of this Assembly, community leaders, employers, educators, caregivers, and all Islanders to talk more about mental illness and to reach out to those who may be suffering and encourage them to seek help through the growing number of programs and services offered across the Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to second this motion.

Mental illness affects many, either directly or indirectly. It is gratifying to see so many people speaking openly today about mental health and to know that more and more people are coming forward with help. It's time to have open conversations to ensure those in need do not suffer alone.

As the Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services stated, we all have a role to play in supporting people with mental illness, and until we end the stigma there is little that any of us can do. Many mental health issues begin in childhood and adolescence and can be addressed through appropriate diagnosis and care. Because of this we need to create conditions where parents feel safe to ask questions about their children's mental health.

Teachers continue to make a real difference for students with mental health challenges by keeping aware and offering more resources that promote and support student needs. It is encouraging to see more employers developing healthy workplaces, talking opening with employees about mental health in the workplace, and supporting their employees when they may or do need help.

It is also good to see more programs becoming available for seniors with mental health issues. Seniors sometimes find it hard to accept changes in their lives and they benefit greatly when they know they aren't alone and they are able to support each other. Mental illnesses can be treated effectively through programs and services best suited to individual needs. The more the stigma can be reduced, the better the outcomes will be.

I would like to commend Bell Canada and the Bell Let's Talk initiative. It started in September 2010 as a five-year \$50 million program to create a stigma-free Canada and drive action in mental healthcare research and the workplace.

With Clara Hughes, our famous Canadian Olympian, leading the national conversations, Canadians have sent almost half a billion messages of hope and support on the Bell Let's Talk days over the last five years.

I had the pleasure to hear Clara Hughes at Colonel Gray. During that time when Clara Hughes was at Colonel Gray High School you could have heard a pin drop when the whole student body was in the gymnasium.

Bell Let's Talk has funded more than 600 partner organizations, leading the mental health movement in every region of Canada. Today 81% of Canadians say they are more aware of mental health issues than they were five years ago, 70% believe attitudes have improved, and 57% believe stigma has been reduced.

In September of 2015 the fifth anniversary of the Bell Let's Talk program announced an extension to their national mental health initiative for a further five years and an increase in Bell's total funding commitment for Canadian mental health to at least \$100 million.

Canadians have fully embraced the mental health cause, reaching out to those who struggle, making their own voices and stories heard, fighting the stigma around mental illness while also driving Bell Let's Talk action in anti-stigma, care, research, and workplace programs by getting engaged, said George Cope, president and CEO of BCE and Bell Canada.

Most Canadians, especially young people, say they've seen a significant positive change in awareness and attitudes around mental health in the last five years, but much work remains, although we do have some momentum in this area of mental health.

Mental illness also remains the number one cause of workplace disability and costs the national economy more than 50 billion a year. One in five Canadians will struggle with a mental illness at some point in their lives, but as few as one in three seek the help they need, largely because of the lingering stigma. Bell Let's Talk is helping move Canada's mental health forward based on four action pillars: anti-stigma, care and access, new research, and workplace leadership.

The next Bell Let's Talk day is set for January 27th, 2016, and the team continues to welcome new spokespeople and ambassadors. Last year, Clara and Quebec spokespeople, comedian Michel Mpambara, and singer/songwriter Stefie Shock were joined by TSN host Michael Landsberg, entertainers Howie Mandel and Mary Walsh, comedian Kevin Breel, CFL player Shea Emry, and professional golfer Andrew Jensen. New to the Bell Let's Talk team this year are singer/songwriter Serena Ryder, CFL player Etienne Boulay, and actor Marie Soleil Dion.

When doing some research for seconding this motion, I realized that Bell has reached out to all of the provincial premiers asking for comments about their Bell Let's Talk program and the mental illness strategy across the program. Our own Premier, the Premier of Prince Edward Island, had this to say: Mental health is a critical component of overall wellness and, along with physical health, a cornerstone of PEI's wellness strategy. That's why the support of partners like Bell and initiatives like Bell Let's Talk are so important. They are helping to transform the role mental health plays in our individual and community health.

I had the pleasure to attend the True Patriot Love dinner last week and I know there are people in the military who are suffering from illness as a result of their tours of duty. Bronwen Evans, the president of True Patriot Love, was here last year and she talks about the need for funding programs

like suicide prevention, couples in family therapy, and animal support therapy. The Bell True Patriot Love fund supports community-based mental health programs to help military families overcome these challenges.

I know the minister has already talked about local initiatives. I'm proud of the local initiative at the University of Prince Edward Island initiated by the student union. On March 9th, 2015, the student union announced a \$20,000 investment in the newly created mental health initiatives fund. The money would be used to fund projects and proposals aimed at combating mental illness on the campus with an emphasis on prevention, awareness and support. As we know, student mental health is an emerging issue on Canadian campuses and the student union has taken steps to address it.

I encourage anyone who's out there who's feeling the need for help to speak to a trusted friend, family member or teacher. It's time that we reduce this stigma. I'm pleased to support this motion.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to rise in support of this motion. I think it's a very timely and critical subject to end the stigma surrounding mental illness. Let me speak to three points of that, give this some reality.

Starting in 2009 I was involved and then was eventually chair of what became a sizable foundation that was aimed at making a contribution in the area of health. We spent some time studying the situation across the country, and in our own deliberations and consulting with experts, in effect to identify areas or core causes where there was the greatest need and where there was an opportunity with the right efforts and resources to make a difference. After some time and some effective advice, we identified two core causes. One of them was Type 2 diabetes and the other was child and youth mental health.

The more we learned about situations with child and youth mental health is that it's one of the most critical areas in our whole society where, frankly, we have some real work to do. It's estimated that by the time a young person gets to be a young adult, 18 or 19 years of age, at least 20% of those young people will have a serious problem of anxiety or depression or other mental health issues.

One of things we sponsored, and it was very telling – we brought together all the universities in Atlantic Canada to discuss this. That, in turn, involved the counsellors as well as students who themselves spoke directly about their experience. The key thing that came out there was how uplifting and therapeutic it was, and educating and edifying, to have the students speak about their experience and to talk about what it took for them to get beyond the stigma to tell anyone about how they were suffering.

One of the experts at that symposium spoke based on a very large survey of students in the United States and Canada. It was on the order of almost 600,000 respondents. It was a very large data set. These students answered in some significant detail. One of the questions was to ask these students if they had ever considered committing suicide. The number, the percentage of the respondents who said that they had thought about it, was shocking. In the order of, let me say, 17%. The number who had actually attempted it was also shocking, in the order of upwards of 1%, to some degree.

The most striking piece of information in the follow-up questions – and this is very good social science data – the most striking finding or response was when the same students who said that they had considered it were asked if they'd ever told anyone about it, 52% said they'd never spoken to anyone, not a friend, a lover or a family member, about the fact that they had contemplated suicide.

I think that totally drives home the point about the danger, the risk, and the harm of the stigma around mental health, particularly when it becomes wrapped up with other ways in which young people are concerned about their image and their relationship and how people perceived them.

I'll take it to another context. The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point spoke about being at the True Patriot Love dinner last week, and that's our veterans. Lieutenant Commander Allan Callard was one of the co-organizers of that dinner, along with our former premier Robert Ghiz, and then at the cenotaph here the following day Lieutenant Command Callard spoke elegantly in his comments – I think they went viral or certainly a lot of people who saw them – and with good reason. Because he spoke strongly and with conviction about the veterans who have following service – and it seems to be more increasingly prevalent – the veterans who served, for example, in Afghanistan coming home with what is increasingly being diagnosed as, and that they're speaking about more frequently, as PTSD.

Indeed, we learned through the investigative series by the *Globe and Mail* that was recently published in the lead-up to Remembrance Day that there are at least – and everyone who speaks about this – says at least 58 of our service men and women who've been to Afghanistan since coming home have committed suicide, which is a stunning finding, and then it can't help – and in many cases we read about those situations where their own families were not aware that things had reached this point. Again, the stigma.

When Lieutenant Commander Callard was speaking here at the cenotaph on Remembrance Day he made a point of saying that there were veterans on parade who are suffering from PTSD, and he spoke about the fact that they were there and how brave they were to come and be present again, being mindful of the stigma.

Last Saturday I met with the new minister, the hon. Kent Hehr, who has been named as the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence. Minister Hehr is very committed to this and in fact, in his mandate letter from Prime Minister Trudeau, it's indicated that there will be two national centres of excellence created under Minister Hehr's leadership, and that one of the two will be dedicated to the subject of the mental health of people who have served and, in particular, PTSD.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier MacLauchlan: I can assure that Minister Hehr himself, having experienced his own disability, is totally committed to this and we look forward to the work that will be done.

I speak from a third context and it's one that we are learning more and more about all the time, and we're going to learn more because we're working on it, and that is the role of mental health and addictions in our own justice system.

As Minister of Justice and Public Safety we are more and more aware of the role and the very challenging part that mental health and addictions play in the cases that ultimately end up before our courts. This is, again, something that is all tied up with the stigma that comes with people not feeling welcome or not feeling encouraged to speak up about their condition in a timely way in many cases that we see ending up in our justice system.

I recently visited the Provincial Correctional Centre at Sleepy Hollow and you'll see it there. It's a very complicated situation, almost by definition involving people who had themselves families that weren't supportive, or worse. That combination of a home life – or in some cases no home life – where there's not support and encouragement, and then the combination of mental health issues and addictions, raises a very significant challenge not only for our justice system, but for our health system, and indeed, increasingly, for our education system.

It's with that in view where we see the benefit of the HUB model that we spoke about earlier today, to deal with child protection and bringing together people from Justice and Public Safety and from education and from health and from Family and Human Services, creating a platform and horizontal collaboration where, within government, we will be more alert to these issues and where we will deal with them in a way that is more proactive and collaborative.

In the near future we're going to be making progress on a mental health and addictions strategy, and I'm sure as that work goes forward the issue that's brought forward by this motion, that being to end the stigma

surrounding mental health, will be front and centre. Indeed, it's something that I think we're doing in this Legislature tonight and we're going to find that we're doing increasingly as we identify issues where we can take action and where we will, on all sides of the House, be collaborative and proactive in ensuring that we end this stigma.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

No doubt everybody in this House has known somebody, or has somebody in their family, who has been touched by mental illness. I'm certainly no exception to that. People's lives are altered when that happens, not just the life of the individual, but the extended family and the supports in the community around them. While many of those people are able to make a full recovery if they happen to live with a treatable chronic mental illness, the stigma attached to that is not something that goes away. That's something we really all – every single one of us – needs to work on in order to help alleviate that.

There's a certain unwillingness to talk about this, even within families, even within relationships, couples. It's a very difficult thing to talk about. When we don't talk about problems the repercussions can be extremely grave. We have enormously high rates of suicide in this country and that's a real tragedy, a terrible tragedy. Of course, here on Prince Edward Island we hear about this on an alarmingly regular basis. The use of anti-depressants has doubled in the last 10 years. Depression is the most commonly, now, diagnosed illness. It's a real – I don't like to use the word epidemic loosely but it truly is. Mental illness is an epidemic in our society.

I think things are improving. I think the stigma surrounding that is – I think it's lessening, and I think that has to do with education in the same way that children are not born racist, they are not born sexist, they

are not born with any sort of attitude towards mental illness. It's something that they learn. With the inclusivity that we have in our education system now I think that is changing. I hope in a generation or two the stigma will have completely gone away. Mental illness, of course, is equally as devastating and painful and dangerous as a physical ailment. It's just invisible. But that makes it, perhaps, even more difficult to deal with.

Stigma is one thing, but here on the Island and around the world I think we need to treat mental illness better. When mental illness is less prevalent the stigma surrounding it will also become less common. We need to invest in collaborative, integrative care models where we use counsellors, dietitians, life coaches, all of those elements. Community supports can be enormously important in dealing with mental health. We need on-time services, something that is improving, and I give credit to the government for that. Things are improving but we need on-time services for people in mental crisis.

We need to, to a certain extent, I believe, de-medicalize mental illness. We have to put the dollars into front-line staff, whether they be counsellors and psychologists and social workers, the people who are really dealing and offering front-line help to people in crisis.

I, of course, stand in support of the motion. I'm really glad that in the House we are able to talk about it. I hope, in our wider community, it becomes easier and easier to do the same thing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness and Family and Human Services for bringing this motion forward and thank everyone that spoke to it thus far.

I am a firm believer we need to do everything we can to eliminate the stigma about mental illness. We can offer all the

best programs in the world but people need to feel safe and feel that they can access these programs. As we know from this House and what we do from day to day, discussion and dialogue is a key to openness and to make people feel comfortable, they can say what's on their mind.

Also, it's a concern about the increase of PTSD, people returning from the wars in Afghanistan and other wars. That's affecting many military men and women.

I'd certainly like to support this motion.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an appropriate motion and it's appropriate for it to be discussed in this Legislature. I know over the last few years the addictions issue was a tremendous issue, and still is with a lot of young Islanders and Islanders in general.

Ten or 20 years ago you didn't want to talk about addiction, you didn't want to talk about mental illness. It was a thing that we hid. Up until recently those four hospitals – we chose to put everybody behind the doors at Hillsborough Hospital. At one time there were over 400 patients in that hospital and we left them there. We put them out of sight.

Like the Leader of the Third Party said, we put it away from us. We didn't want to look at it. We thought if we didn't see it, then it's not a problem and we medicalized it. You're right, Leader of the Third Party. We medicalized it and we shouldn't.

I think we made tremendous strides here in Prince Edward Island in terms of this. No longer are they housed in Hillsborough Hospital or put away and hid. I grew up as a kid and living in Charlottetown you'd walk around those places and you'd see: Oh, what's in there? It was horrible, I think. It was one of the great things society has done is to take them out of these institutions.

I've got to say, we've done a good job in Prince Edward Island. I might even say a great job, to this point. There are a lot more issues but we have a Canadian Mental Health Association in my district that does a tremendous job of assisting people with mental challenges.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: I want to thank each and every worker there. We support the organization through the Labour Market Development Agreement and we support them well over \$1 million, which is well spent. And you have a number of other organizations.

One of the things I'm really proud of – and I know some people may disagree or may say: He's wrong. But my district, we have a number of group homes and we've allowed them, we've taken them out of the chains and out of the striped jackets and put them into the community. We've moved along in society. But I go through my district and I visit the group homes and they're wonderful people. They have a home, they have each other. It's not like Vancouver where you have Hastings Street where a lot of the people on that street, I'm told through conversations, a lot of them have addiction problems but a lot of them have mental challenges. We've chose to not have a Hastings Street in Prince Edward Island, which is great. We've continued to work with them.

But there are a number of other organizations, as I've said, that work with them. I'm proud that this House, over the last number of years, has taken, opened up the curtains, or opened up a discussion and opened up a dialogue on addictions. The previous year we had our committee meetings, we went throughout the province, and we had great cooperation with the opposition. We went and visited Islanders.

One of the first things that we've done in this Legislature was most committee meetings, people that attended the committee meetings were supposed to present themselves in public. In this Legislature since 1996 – and I must say a lot of the times it was, you know, we're going to go to the public hearings. Well, you can't have private public hearings. We took the

rule and we said no. If a family wants to come in and talk about addictions with their own addictions case to the members of the Legislature, we had private discussions with them, which went really well because we heard from a lot of families the problems they were having.

We brought a report back to this Legislature. It was an extremely proud moment for me, and I know everybody in this House, when the government agreed to building the facility in Summerside, the Strength Program. We've seen in the new budget that we're building a new facility in Charlottetown for 12 beds – or, hopefully it's in the budget, that we're going to build a district advisory council in Charlottetown.

That's crucial. But it only came about because we had the courage and we had the fortitude to talk about it, to go out in the public and discuss it with the public and to hear firsthand from them. That's the problem a lot of times, as members of the Legislature. A lot of the times we tend to take consulting reports. We listen to the consultant and the consultant tells us what to do. This time we said: No consultants, we're going to go out and directly talk to the people. I know a lot of my colleagues in the House here, we did a tremendous job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: The health committee under the member from West Royalty – he chaired the committee that took us across Prince Edward Island and listened to the stories, listened to the concerns.

Maybe it's time we do the same thing with this, go out and listen to the community and see what they had to say. We do have a number of good organizations out here that will give us advice on this important issue.

As I said earlier, PTSD, the challenges. I was with the Premier on Remembrance Day. It was great. That was something that would never have been done, I think, in the past, the speaking out, Allan Callard speaking about it. It's about time we speak about it because, I know, my father was a veteran, and I could tell the strain that he was under, and I could tell the strain a lot of Legion members were under because they had to contain their mental – or no, it wasn't

mental, post-traumatic stress inside themselves.

A lot of people thought: They're all down at the legion. They're down at the legion for a reason, because we didn't have any supports for them. They had to support each other and the Legion was the support for them. Okay? That's how they got together and that's how they worked it out.

My father, he had his struggles with it. What made it twice as worse for him was the movies of the day and all the stories on television, everything, was John Wayne and all these guys glorifying war and glorifying the big battles and all that. They had to sit and watch these shows, you could see it. They had to sit and watch those shows and say: It wasn't like that. My father was in the occupation and he had to go into the concentration camps. It wasn't like that.

Anyway, he had his struggles and that's all I'm going to say.

Thank you.

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hour has been called.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, Friday, November 20th, at 10:00 a.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good evening.

The Legislature adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at 10:00 a.m.