

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature sat at 10:00 a.m.

Rotary Youth Parliament

Speaker: I would like to remind everyone that the 29th Rotary Youth Parliament will be held this afternoon right here in the Chamber starting at approximately 1:45 p.m., with the Speech From the Throne delivered by His Honour the Honourable Frank Lewis.

The session continues throughout the day until 8:30 p.m. this evening, and then it will resume again tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. and it'll run until noon. Students from across the Island, of course, will be debating various current issues.

Make sure you drop by and support our young parliamentarians.

Speaker's Ruling

Speaker: Hon. members, at the end of Oral Question Period yesterday, and rising on a point of order, the hon. Leader of the Third Party, citing *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forums*, 6th edition, citations § 565 and 541, requested that I rule on the admissibility on Motion No. 80 for debate in this House.

Citation §541 provides as follows:

“As the *Notice Paper* is published by authority of the House, a notice of motion, or of a question to be put by a Member, which contains unbecoming expressions, infringes its rules, or is otherwise irregular, may, under the Speaker's authority, be corrected by the clerks at the Table. These alternations are submitted to the Member who gave the notice, or if necessary to the Speaker. A notice which is wholly out of order, may be withheld from publication on the *Notice Paper*. If the irregularity is not extreme, the notice is printed but reserved for further consideration.”

Citation §565 provides as follows: “A motion should be neither argumentative, nor in the style of a speech, nor contain unnecessary provisions or objectionable words. It is usually expressed in the affirmative, even when its purpose and effect are negative.”

The hon. Leader of the Third Party suggested that Motion No. 80, by calling for a binding referendum, is asking this Legislature to do something that is not within its power to do so and is therefore not in order. In addition, the Leader of the Third Party requested that I consider not only whether this motion infringes on the rules of this House, but also whether the misrepresentation of the proposed referendum as binding constitutes objectionable words.

I am now prepared to rule on this matter, hon. members. The purpose of a motion, as provided for in citation §552 of *Beauchesne*, provides, in part, as follows:

“This proposition, called a motion, is a proposal moved by one Member, in accordance with certain well-established rules, that the House do something, or order something to be done or express an opinion with regard to some matter.”

Motion 80, as proposed to this House, offers a proposition to this House for a response to the November 7th, 2016 plebiscite on electoral reform by calling for: a Referendum on Democratic Renewal Act; the inclusion of mixed member proportional representation as one of two choices for a clear and binding referendum as provided for in a proposed act; for members of this House to debate and determine the alternative electoral option to mixed member proportional representation for inclusion in the Act, said act to be passed before the next provincial general election and; that the proposed referendum be held in conjunction with the next provincial election.

Hon. members, whether a member agrees with this proposition is subject to consideration and vote by members themselves, as was the case in Motion 54, but it cannot be ruled out of order on the grounds of objectionable language as envisaged in *Beauchesne's* citation §565. These are matters for debate. It is not for the Speaker to determine such matters in advance of a decision by all members.

Further, I draw your attention to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 2nd edition, 2009, O'Brien and Bosc, Chapter 5,

page 261 on Parliamentary Procedure as follows:

“In arriving at a decision on a procedural point, the Speaker may draw upon a full range of procedural information and examine the precedents to determine how the Standing Orders have been applied and interpreted in the past. The Standing Orders, though a vital reference, constitute a comparatively small part of the much larger body of House of Commons procedure and practice that the Speaker will consult in preparing a ruling. The primary records of the House, the *Journals* and *Debates*, are the richest repository of information on precedents, practices and usages as well as being the most reliable [74]. Finally, while Speakers must take the Constitution and statutes into account when preparing a ruling, numerous Speakers have explained that it is not up to the Speaker to rule on the ‘constitutionality’ or ‘legality’ of measures before the House [75].”

Also hon. members, on the same page of O’Brien and Bosc, former House of Commons Speaker John Fraser is quoted as stating the following when adapting old rules to new situations:

“When interpreting the rules of procedure, the Speaker must take into account not only of their letter but of their spirit and be guided by the most basic rule of all, that of common sense.”

Hon. members, this motion represents a means to an end, it is not the end itself. The same can be said of Motion 54. If it had passed, which it did not, a bill would have had to be drafted, introduced in this House and debated before the opinion expressed in the motion would have legal effect. Motion 80 is no different. Motion 80 may be passed or defeated; however, if passed, the Assembly will have clearly expressed its opinion, thereby establishing an expectation that a Referendum on Democratic Renewal Act will be developed and introduced for debate in this Assembly for consideration before it will ever have legal effect. A bill based on Motion 80, as with all bills, once introduced, may become law on passage or it may be defeated. The content of that bill, the provisions contained in it, the precise language used in each section, legal and constitutional considerations with respect to

the binding nature of the results, the two electoral options presented, the form and timing of the referendum, and all other matters associated with such a referendum will, if the motion passes, be expected to be provided for in the bill itself, guided by Motion 80 should it pass, and subject, I am sure, to the closest of scrutiny, debate and vote in this Legislature.

Hon. members, the issues raised are not procedural in nature but are primarily points of law and constitutionality. As noted in O’Brien and Bosc, it is not the role of the Speaker to rule on the admissibility of a motion based on asserted points of law or constitutional considerations. Such matters are unquestionably for the consideration of the House itself in debate on motions and, arguably a more onerous responsibility for promoters of bills brought before this House but are not points of order relating to procedures for the determination of your Speaker. Further, members, if points of order are to be raised on the admissibility of a motion to this House, the point of order ought to be raised before debate commences on the motion and not after the House has spent a considerable amount of time debating the subject.

Accordingly, hon. members, I find Motion 80 is admissible as presented.

Thank you very much.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everyone in the gallery and colleagues to the House, and those watching from home or on the Internet.

First, a special welcome to those in the gallery who will take part later today and tomorrow with Rotary Youth Parliament. Many familiar faces, we won’t name them one-by-one. I note they’ve got an 18/17 split between the government and the opposition, so I’m sure they’ll have a good time over the next couple of days and make a contribution to our ongoing democracy in this province.

Today is International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. In an effort to show solidarity with Island women, the Prince Edward Island Man Up Group will be joining with the PEI Advisory Council for the Status of Women, and the chair of the advisory council is with us in the gallery today, as is the executive director. They will be joining today at The Guild for a special screening of Harmony Wagner's film *Singing to Myself* and then participating in a march of solidarity down Richmond Street. I recognize all women and men in this province who work to eliminate violence against women.

Following today's proceedings I will be signing a proclamation to make the upcoming Tuesday, November 29th, to recognize it as Giving Tuesday, a day when citizens work together and encourage each other to share commitments and rally for favoured causes and build a stronger community and a culture of charity, which is well rooted in this province, and to think about how we can help others.

Earlier this morning I participated in a food bank drive at *le Carrefour de l'Isle-Saint-Jean*.

C'était un événement de succès. Ils ont recueilli 1,300 livres de donations pour la banque alimentaire. Lundi prochain, je participerai à une cérémonie de signature avec le ministre des Relations canadiennes et de la Francophonie de la province de Québec, Jean-Marc Fournier, encore au Carrefour de l'Isle-Saint-Jean et ce sera de signer un mémorandum entre le Québec et l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard qui favorisera la poursuite de la coopération entre nos deux provinces.

It was a successful event. A total of 1,300 pounds of goods were donated for the food bank. Next Monday, I will attend a signing ceremony with Quebec's Minister of Canadian Relations and the Francophonie, again at the Carrefour de l'Isle-Saint-Jean. A memorandum will be signed between Quebec and Prince Edward Island to promote continued cooperation between both our provinces.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

As the Premier alluded to, today is a very important day because it marks the start of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. I think we must also remember the tragic event that happened in 1989 in Montreal and that was a terrible event. I think we must praise some organizations here on the Island that do wonderful work: The PEI Family Violence Prevention Services, the Chief Mary Bernard Memorial Women's Shelter, the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, and also the Family Violence Information for Everyone.

I, over a lot of years, had to deal with violence against women in my previous profession, same as a couple of the other members across the hall, and it's terrible to see these things and to deal with them and the problems they can (Indistinct) on somebody's family's life.

I would like to also say a shout-out to Craig and Willow Harris, two residents in my district who are celebrating 15 years, a great young couple. Craig is a great entrepreneur and he is a great supporter of mine. I would also like to recognize Rachael Green who is here today from my district. She will be in the rotary parliament. I've known Rachael since she has been a little girl and she is a great athlete and a good friend. Also, hello to Kevin Stewart. Kevin lives in my district and his parents, Jimmy, and they're just great people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much.

Good morning, everybody, and welcome to the gallery to all who are present. I want to extend a special welcome to the students who are participating in this year's Rotary Youth Parliament, and also to Jack Headley who I saw walk in who is a political science

teacher at Bluefield where all of my children went. All of their rebellious political natures were corrected by Mr. Headley's teaching. Thank you.

Also, I want to extend a special welcome to the people from the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women. I see Mari Basiletti. I saw Dawn Wilson, Jane Ledwell is here, and Rosalyn Abbott. Nice to see you all.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I, too, rise to welcome all of our guests to the gallery today and welcome – I see Mr. MacAdam, a teacher at Colonel Gray High School who is doing some tremendous work. He is one of the lead teachers on take your device to school, so I want to acknowledge him and all of the educators in the gallery today.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to welcome everyone that is here today, especially our youth parliament. I have always been impressed by the calibre of students who have participated over the years. I'm not sure if you're 50/50 yet, but I know in one of the parliaments a couple of years ago we had 50% representation for women in that as well.

But I hope you really enjoy everything, and I want to recognize one of my constituents that's a teacher with them, Todd Dymant from Northam, who is a teacher in Kensington.

I also would like to recognize another one of my constituents, a young man who is studying at Mount St. Vincent. He has just

received notification of the dean's list for first-class honours, and that is Tyler Albert of St. Eleanors. Tyler is the son of Ronnie and Gaylene Albert and the grandson of Gabe and Eileen Keough, and I know they are very proud of his accomplishments in his studies in accounting.

Finally, there are a couple of birthdays, with your indulgence: I would like to recognize my brother who is celebrating his birthday tomorrow – Blaine Dymant is a great constituent from Summerside-Wilmot; and also my constituents and also my brothers-in-law, Kevin and Kent Biggar, will celebrate on Sunday the 27th with my daughter Tasha who lives in Halifax.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to send out a big welcome to all of the students in the gallery here. We have some current Pages and some former Pages.

I would also like to say hello to a constituent of mine and a teacher at Westisle and a fine teacher at that, according to my son that just graduated from there and had him last year, Brian Gard. Brian's son Chandler is also here, he is one of our current Pages here in the Legislature, so a big welcome to you folks.

Also, I would like to say hello to all of my constituents out in Alberton-Roseville.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, would like to rise to welcome the youth parliamentarians here to the Legislature. It is with pride that I say this is a project of my rotary club, the Hillsborough Rotary Club, at least when I can get there. On behalf of the rotary club I would like to

thank the department of education, the Speaker's and the Clerk's offices of the Assembly, the Public Schools Branch, the French language school board, the Rodd Charlottetown Hotel, Murphy's Community Centre, and teacher advisors and rotary clubs of PEI for enabling this to happen. I would also like to wish the youth parliamentarians well.

I saw one or two international students coming through the door there today. I would like to welcome them to Prince Edward Island and welcome them to our Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

It's a pleasure for me to rise as well today, and in particular I would like to recognize a couple of the individuals that will be partaking in the Rotary Youth Parliament this weekend. They would be from Stratford-Kinlock, and that would be Olivia Corrigan and Lilly Hickox. It's great to see you here and I'm sure you will do our district proud.

I would also like to mention that I was reviewing not only the list of participants, but then I was looking at the seating plan as well. I know Devin Schut will be occupying my seat. He's not from the district but he is a great young man. I know his brother and his father very well as well. But in particular I searched through the list of who the Member from Stratford-Kinlock was going to be, and as hard as I looked I could not find that individual on the list, so I can only ascertain that the member from Stratford-Kinlock is in government. If that's the case, I'm hoping that member is the minister of health so that that individual can finally do some good things for health here on PEI.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to welcome everybody to the gallery today. Our future politicians await us, especially Riley Cole, Timmy Yorke, and Todd Dymont, a former teacher of mine. A great teacher from the past and certainly a well-respected individual in the community.

Also I'd like to wish everybody back home that is watching a good day and a great weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today and, of course, welcome everyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald.

I wanted to wish the Novice A North Star team out of North Rustico good luck as they head to O'Leary to play some hockey today. My son's on that team.

Also, I wanted to mention that on Saturday night there is a fundraiser at the New London Fire Hall for Douglas and Harriet Cole to help them raise the extra money they need above and beyond the amount they were able to get from Family and Human Services for a stair lift and a ramp. It's Saturday at 7:30 p.m. I encourage everyone to attend that can.

Of course, I wanted to recognize youth parliament and all the people here in the gallery today. It's fantastic. I was a youth parliamentarian back in the day. Of course, I want to recognize Page and opposition finance critic in youth parliament, Sébastien Arsenault, bonne chance – hold them to account.

I noticed that the leader of the opposition, Logan Rose, I believe, is also critic for the area of communities, land and environment. I think that's a statement as to the importance of that portfolio to the youth and

to this province, so make sure you make some good stuff happen there.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, just a couple of birthdays.

To Carter Jeffery, who is a very big advocate of heritage and historic buildings, and he recently rallied to save the Leard's Grist Mill, it's his birthday. Sharon Labchuk, also in my district, former leader of the Green Party, and she does a lot of good work helping me keep the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment on his toes, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise in the House today and welcome everyone visiting in the gallery.

All the young people for youth parliament, it's great to see the interest that you have in moving forward with political life, I guess, in this province.

I would like to also recognize that it is International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. To recognize the members from the Status of Women, who are in the gallery. I look forward to the screening this evening. I hope everyone has a great day and a good weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I won't be long. I, too, want to welcome all of the students here participating here in the Rotary Youth Parliament for the next couple of days. It's a great experience, and I know I'll be trying to catch some of it over the weekend. It's usually pretty enjoyable for everyone.

I'd also like to give a shout-out for the PC Party of Prince Edward Island that is having a big event tonight. A big sold-out event. You are all welcome, of course, if you want to come to the Confederation Centre tonight and hear us. We're going. The Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning was there last year.

I'd also like to give a shout-out to my friend Dennis King who had taught me when I first got involved in politics. His quote was: Forgive and remember.

I certainly enjoyed the political panel this morning while I listened to Mary Lynn Kane who has been saying terrible things about me over the years while she swam and swam against the current and certainly hurt her reputation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today, as well, and welcome all those in the gallery and those viewing at home in District 22 Summerside-St. Eleanors.

Just a reminder to all those viewing in Summerside-St. Eleanors about the Santa Claus Parade this evening. It will start at 6:30 p.m. It'll start at Holland College on Water Street and it'll wind its way up Water Street. Yours truly will be emceeing. I hope to see you all out there. I want to thank Downtown Summerside and the great volunteers for coming out and putting that on for our community.

I'd also like to welcome the Rotary Youth Parliamentarians and wish them the best of luck.

I see we do have an exchange student here. I was actually blessed, probably about six years ago, I was a host mom to a youth exchange student from Brittany, France. It was one of the best experiences of my life. I'm still very close to him as well.

I'd also like to wish the students that are partaking in my portfolios – Timmy Yorke, who is the minister of family and human services, and I like how they've got the minister of women, children and seniors put together, as well, and that would be Olivia Corrigan, so you'll be representing the seniors. Also, a shout-out to Brae Delaney-Smith from Three Oaks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I welcome everyone back today, especially those viewing on EastLink and online.

I'd like to welcome everyone in the gallery, too, especially the youth parliament. From our school at SRS I have Keir Hennessey, Randy Antle, and Logan Rose. Souris-Elmira is well represented, not only in youth parliament. We have Brandon O'Brien as a Page and, of course, we have myself. So in the future, I'd say Souris-Elmira will be taking over this Legislature.

I'd like to recognize Paul K. MacDonald, their teacher. Paul K. was one of the best goalies that ever came out of Souris. Today Paul K. still plays hockey, but he's playing out ice, so he knows how to beat a goalie.

On another note, tonight is firemen's appreciation night in Souris. It's an appreciation night my father started when he was chief so it's continuing on into the next generation. It's an appreciation night where we have all services come together. It's fire department, it's Island EMS, it's our police services, it's our mutual aid departments; St. Peters, Central Kings, Eastern Kings. It's an appreciation where firefighters receive provincial and federal medals, and volunteers of the year.

These are tokens of just appreciation, how much we appreciate our firefighters across Prince Edward Island. On behalf of the Premier and the Legislative Assembly, we appreciate all firefighters right across Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Before I go to statements by members, I, too, just want to take the opportunity to welcome everybody here today, but in particular the young people, the youth parliamentarians, the Pages. You are our future. It's great to see you here and I'm sure we're going to have a great weekend.

The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

Mr. Dumville: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to compliment all the future leaders here today.

I would hope they would become future Rotarians, too, just put a plug in for that. I wish you well this weekend. You're giving up your time to look after these young people and I know they'll be well represented with you as Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I will just finish up before I carry on. I would like to – the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira mentioned that Paul K. MacDonald is here, and I didn't notice Paul. Anyway, Paul K., you're right, hon. member, he is a great goalie, still – was a great goalie. In fact, Paul K. MacDonald back-stopped the C and W Broomliners to numerous championships in the Confederation City Rec League. That's a team that I coached early on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, want to welcome all of those youth in the gallery and some other individuals, Brian Gard and Todd Dymont.

I did notice that the minister of health and wellness in the youth parliament is Timmy Yorke. I just wanted to give him a little bit

of advice: 11 months ago I looked a bit like you and now I'm this today, so the minister of health and wellness, it'll age you fast. I just thought I'd prepare you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Emily Wainwright Schurman

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Emily Wainwright Schurman is a well-loved and respected, retired teacher, who has dedicated her time to Lights for Life. This event lights up the skies over Prince County Hospital each year, plus other smaller light displays that are dedicated to the memory and honour of loved ones. All proceeds go towards equipment for the Prince County Hospital.

Emily has been a supporter for many years and this year she has been named their honorary chairperson. This fundraising event is a wonderful opportunity to remember someone you love each holiday season, and has raised millions of dollars for the hospital foundation since its inception.

For many years Emily has watched these lights from her living room window on Granville Street and has honoured and remembered her loved ones in this way. She has endured the cold to emcee and has been a member of the choir as well. Her family has only missed a few years of participating, and now she enjoys the tradition with her two grown sons, Charlie and Ben, along with her grandchildren.

She has said: that the idea of light is a spiritual connection. Warm lights in the darkness, like the ones we remember and honor.

The musical choreographed lighting ceremony also includes performances from the PCH staff choir as well as hot chocolate, cider, and cookies for spectators.

I hope everyone will join in this year and place a light for someone special. Lights for

Life will take place on December 7th at 6:30 p.m. at Prince County Hospital.

Thank you to Emily for all of your dedication to a wonderful way to shine light where sometimes there is darkness.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Recipients of 2016 PEI Senior Islanders of the Year Awards

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is with great pleasure I stand and acknowledge the five recipients of the 2016 PEI Senior Islanders of the Year Awards.

Verna Barlow of Poplar Grove, who lends her dedicated volunteer time to many organizations such as Stewart Memorial Healthcare Auxiliary, MacNeill's Mills Women's Institute, and was instrumental in launching the Caring Cupboard in Tyne Valley.

Maria Bernard of Summerside has assumed an admirable leadership role in organizations including the Evangeline Regional Agricultural Exhibition and Acadian Festival, St. Thomas Aquinas Society, and the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre.

Alan Stuart William "Bill" Hogg of Cornwall has tackled many volunteer activities such as supporting the school breakfast program, delivering the presentation Know Yourself and Inspire Others, and sat on the board for Kids Count. He has also made the concept of an educational trail system become a reality.

Annie Lee MacDonald of Augustine Cove is the founder and president of the PEI chapter of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, a member of the national Hard of Hearing Association board, and teaches the three levels of speech reading on PEI.

Alice Taylor of Stratford is a serving president of the Early Childhood Development Association of PEI and is

involved with the Handle with Care program, Holland College Retiree association, and is currently a member of Education 2020.

Mr. Speaker, these five outstanding seniors are being recognized for their admirable work and contributions to our community, and I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of this Assembly to thank them for all they do.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

North Rustico Lions Club 50th anniversary

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the North Rustico Lions Club. They have served and continue to serve Islanders with great pride. I recently attended a dinner to celebrate and honour the club's work on November 5th, and it was especially touching when Desmond Gallant was recognized. He is the last founding member that's still alive. Desmond Gallant, along with Benny Gallant and Peter Gallant, were bestowed with the high honour of being presented with the Lions Club International President Appreciation Certificates.

The North Rustico Lions Club has raised millions of dollars for Island communities over the last 50 years, and in the last four years alone has given out \$368,000 in community donations. The North Rustico Lions Club contribution to our Island communities is truly amazing.

One of the important initiatives of the North Rustico Lions Club is their Lift Program that pays for travel expenses for those who need to travel for medical reasons, for example for cancer treatment, especially if they have to travel off-Island.

Another impactful event at the North Rustico Lions Club is the annual Easter brunch for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which I personally recommend everyone try

to attend. It's especially renowned for its delicious fishcakes.

The North Rustico Lions Club is also one of the biggest donors this year to the Lights for Life fundraiser at the Prince County Hospital, giving \$2,500 to support the Prince County Hospital.

These are just some examples of the bigger initiatives of the North Rustico lions Club, but local residents of North Rustico can attest that they continuously benefit from the Lions Clubs exemplary service to their community.

The Lions Club also boasts a community hall, bowling alley, and a local pub. They are a real centerpiece of the community.

Whenever you're on the north shore, I encourage you all to visit North Rustico, stop by the Lions Club and say hello. I'm sure we'll see this great organization around for at least another 50 years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

State of high-speed Internet (further)

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

Yesterday, the Premier was very clear in this House and told Islanders that by the end of next year we are going to have the best Internet service in Canada.

Question to the Premier: How do you plan to accomplish this amazing feat?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, in a subsequent exchange with the Member from Rustico-Emerald, I referred to it as the most complete service compared with other provinces, that Prince Edward Islanders will have service covering more of our province

than any other province – including rural areas – across this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Later on in Question Period the Premier said:

“By the end of next year Prince Edward Island will be the province that is the closest to having complete Internet access from tip-to-tip.”

Question to the Premier: Is that the only benchmark you’re setting for calling Internet service the best in Canada, as you promised, for Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, on the question of how that will be accomplished, it’s going to be accomplished in a competitive environment with entrants into the market who are bringing services in a variety of formats.

I think it’s going to be for this government and for the members of this House and for the customers to be sure that we have the best possible information, and that we’re encouraging those companies to give the best possible service, and that’s how we’re going to achieve it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

A lot of wiggling going on over there with those answers.

Here’s another quote: PEI will be the first province in Canada to have high-speed province-wide. That wasn’t the Premier. That was former minister Neil LeClair in 2009 talking about the government’s \$8 million Internet deal with Bell Aliant.

Question to the Premier: Why should Islanders believe the same tired old promises that your tired old government is bringing forward?

Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At least we moved up a year from 2008, we’re now in 2009.

This is a very technical issue, as we’ve seen with the companies that we’ve consulted with over the past three weeks. The Internet service from one end of the Island to the other is a complicated issue. There’s three forms of service that’s being provided.

We’re working with each of these companies and trying to see where their business plan and business cases is going forward, and if we can be a part of that and help get better service for Islanders, we’re going to do that Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

PEI Westside Funding deal documentation

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, after nine years of asking, the minister of economic development did an abrupt 180 and is committed to releasing the full, unredacted Internet contract and extension signed by this government.

Minister, will you do the same and release a complete unredacted copy of government’s secret deal with PEI Westside Funding on Testori and Wiebel?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The company in question that (Indistinct) relevant to or talking about this matter is presently before the courts, and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specifics at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, just like the egaming scandal, this is a case of another secret deal with the now-finance minister and Melissa MacEachern in the middle of it.

Can the minister of economic development explain why this government has repeatedly refused to release all documentation of this secret deal?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I repeat, there's legal technicalities that we can't overcome inside this rail or outside this rail. One of the former shareholders, Testori, has filed with the courts a claim against our government in this case. Our legal counsel has advised us not to release any debt-sale agreements with PEI Westside Funding until this matter is settled in the courts.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, this again is another secret deal that our members have been asking government to release since we uncovered it in 2013.

We've asked it in Question Period, asked in committee, we've FOIPPed it, and nothing but silence.

Minister, just what is contained in this secret deal that this government is so desperate to keep from Islanders?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member realizes, as I said yesterday in providing a contract on the Internet services, that this government is very transparent and very open, and we've brought in numerous items now within government and we're legislating.

Whistleblower is the most recent or will be forthcoming. We're not hiding anything, and we're not hiding behind any large corporations. As we've plainly stated, we don't – as the Premier has stated, we don't do business as some others have done in the past. We're a new government. We're transparent. We're accountable to the people of PEI. We're going to continue to build the economic future of PEI to be of prosperity, and we have to deal with large corporations from time to time –

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

FOIPP and PEI Westside Funding

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, if you're open and transparent, why did you deny our FOIPP request for a copy of this secret agreement?

Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, we discussed the FOIPP issue yesterday and I think there as a motion on the floor and passed.

But our department would follow the FOIPP process as it would at any request, and that's what we intend to do on this one as well.

But again, this is before the courts and we have a company that's challenging our government right now and we have to be aware of that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, when we FOIPPed this document the department's response was we couldn't have it because it relates to a decision by Crown council with regards to a prosecuting offence.

Minister, what is the offence referred in the response letter?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We're talking about a company that we sold our interest in, obviously, many years ago. Just in reference to this, the wages that accumulated over the time this company was in business contributing to the Island economy was \$65 million, and the capital expenditures that they included was \$12 million.

These companies, even though there are some failures along the way, less than 0.88% overall on an average each year, we have to consume these companies because they're providing employment at the time for Islanders. They are providing wages, better quality wages for Islanders –

Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Premier said in the last few days, the head of a public body is the minister. The FOIPPed act section the minister's used to deny or request it: The head of a public body can refuse to disclose information if such a move could reveal any information relating to or used in the exercise of prosecutorial discretion.

Minister, what offence was committed in relation to government's secret deal, and what action did this government take or not take?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, and I know the hon. member is enforceable in the questions, but the hon. member must remember that we're representing the taxpayers of PEI, just like he is. I know that he stands behind us, that that is 100%, and he wouldn't want us to

jeopardize the taxpayers in a legal lawsuit from a company.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Testori-Wiebel tax auction

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, just yesterday, this House unanimously passed our motion calling for review of the FOIPP act.

The minister's decision to deny a request states an offence took place and this secret agreement was used in the decision as how government would act in this offence.

Minister, why did government send officials to the tax auction of Testori and Wiebel properties this spring who bid high enough to drive any other interests away but not high enough to trigger the reserve?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Look, this whole situation with Testori is an unfortunate situation, and it happens from time to time that we have business failures for economic climate reasons at the time.

This is an issue we take very seriously. We'll be dealing with loan write-offs, I'm sure, some day in the House here and I hope to answer some really good questions in relevance to that and what they contributed to the economy at the time.

But I think we live and learn as we move forward and we'll continue to grow the economy of PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Testori and Wiebel re: Summerside

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, just last month Testori and Weibel filed for bankruptcy.

Minister, how is the city of Summerside the primary creditor for both companies if this

government sold first securities on both properties in this secret deal that cost taxpayers over \$8 million?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Could he be specific in the question, Mr. Speaker, please?

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, the city of Summerside is the primary creditor for both companies. That's come from research done from the media, and quite a bit of an investigation was done on it. We're wondering why the city of Summerside is the primary creditor right now for both these companies.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm from the understanding, in my notes, that the city of Summerside has been paid in full.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

PEI Westside Funding documentation (further)

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This deal cost taxpayers over \$8 million and 200 good-paying full-time jobs in Summerside. Today shows why the minister should step up and release this secret agreement.

Minister, why have you committed to releasing the unredacted Internet agreement with Bell but you refuse to release this second agreement?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just to reiterate what I've talked about before on this company. When we had some loans within that company there was \$93 million in wages and there was \$27 million in capital investment by this company. It surely offsets some of the negativity surrounding this file.

We have to continue to grow the PEI economy, and by doing that we have to explore all options on trying to prospect new companies to PEI. If you take a look at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently released yesterday – PEI leads the country at 71% in consumer confidence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Low-income housing waitlist re: families

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the Minister of Family and Human Services told the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira that the waitlist for low-income housing sits at 1,300.

How many of those 1,300 on the waitlist for low-income housing are families?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said yesterday as well, affordable housing is one of the most important social infrastructures in the community, and our government is aware of that.

Of the 1,300 that are on the waitlist approximately 300 are families. However, as I also mentioned yesterday, we are reviewing that waitlist because in the past the waitlist didn't have any criteria as to who could apply. There may be people on there who aren't in need that are on the wait list. However, when we do select applicants that go into the public housing, it is based on the need.

It's not how long you've been there, it's always based on need. We take care of those that need it most first.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Low-income housing waitlist re: single parents

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question again to the Minister of Family and Human Services: How many of those people on that waitlist of 1,300 people waiting for low-income housing are single parents?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We don't have it broken down as to what the ages are except for the seniors and families.

However, if the hon. member would like that maybe we could dig into that, but I think that would be digging too far into a client's file. I'd have to get back to you on that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Low-income housing waitlist re: women

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would actually like to know the demographic, geographic, and respecting the privacy of those people, but we want to know who is slipping through the cracks and why they're slipping through the cracks.

You just said that it's going to be based on need, but also based on other parameters. We've seen over and over again how this government makes those parameters so narrow that no one qualifies.

To the minister: How many of those people, the 1,300 people on the waitlist for low-income housing, are women?

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

Ms. Mundy: Mr. Speaker, this government cares about the well-being of all Islanders.

I never said that there wasn't any criteria. The criteria is based on need. The need, we take into account their income, their assets, their age, their health. Those are the things that need is based on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Low-income housing waitlist geographical and demographical information

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the hon. minister did say that they were looking at the parameters, that some people on the waitlist did not need to be on the waitlist. Those are actually narrowing the parameters of who is in need.

Can the minister please provide to this House the geographic and demographic information about the 1,300 people on the waitlist minus any personal data with respect to privacy?

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

Ms. Mundy: Mr. Speaker, when I said that we would be looking at the criteria, we'd be looking at the need income-wise.

We wouldn't be looking at if it was a single mom or otherwise. The only thing that we would be looking at is separating the seniors from families. That's what I meant when I was talking about criteria.

But I do want to also say that we are committed to doing our best with aligning the housing supply with the present and future demands. We are undertaking a housing strategy and that is going to be taking a look at the housing waitlist as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

Low-income housing waitlist re: HST

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question again to the Minister of Family and Human Services: Do you think your

government bringing in the HST in 2012 and increasing it again this year has helped shrink or grow the waitlist of that 1,300 people looking for low-income housing?

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

Ms. Mundy: Mr. Speaker, I think I mentioned yesterday about all the programs that our government does have to help low-to moderate-income Islanders.

I didn't get a chance to get through them all yesterday so I'll try a little bit harder today.

We have increased the food rates to our social assistance clients, a total of investments of over \$2.8 million. We've increased funding to our community partner organizations; the comfort allowance for those low to moderate Islanders. We've increased group home beds. A housing strategy.

Millions and millions into PEI home renovation programs that help Islanders stay in their homes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Poverty reduction strategy

Ms. Compton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Thirteen hundred Islanders who do not have a home. We know this government – in 2015 there was a progress report done on poverty reduction; 2016, progress report on poverty reduction, or supposedly there was.

We feel that there's obviously a struggle here with this government about the poverty reduction plan. Why are we struggling with 1,300 people without homes?

To the minister: Why has your government abandoned any poverty reduction strategy, not providing an update? There has been no update on goals achieved since 2014.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all I need to clarify. There are not 1,300 families that are homeless. There are 1,300 people that are on a waitlist for low-to moderate-income housing.

We do recognize that some Islanders are struggling and some Islanders are anxious. But it doesn't do anything to exploit those fears or exploit them being anxious. Exploitation has never created a single job and it has never, ever fed a single family.

Our government is committed to giving Islanders the tools and supports that they need when they need it most, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our job in opposition is to question, and question for all Islanders. We are not exploiting. We are asking what the plan is for those 1,300 families that are waiting for low-income housing.

We get back to the strategy, the poverty strategy that this government has. Does the minister think that winging it on the poverty reduction strategy will be more effective to finding those 1,300 Islanders low-income housing?

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

Ms. Mundy: Mr. Speaker, I'm confident our government is doing the right thing.

We have a very full and rich mandate letter, my department does, and part of is a poverty reduction strategy. We have a working group together right now that has been taking a look at the actual true picture of poverty on Prince Edward Island and they will be coming back to the House probably, I'd, say middle of next year with some kind of an update or report.

We have engaged a task force, so we will be engaging a task force that will be taking a look at the poverty reduction strategy, but it doesn't happen overnight.

Again, I am convinced that our government is doing the right thing, and I'll give you a little quote from Eleanor Roosevelt: Do what's in your heart that you feel to be right because you're going to be criticized anyway.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Workers Compensation Board concerns

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

A series of reports last year from the Ontario Federation of Labour found that their workplace safety and insurance board not only routinely interferes with the medical care of injured workers, but also that it pressures health professionals to change their diagnoses to the detriment of injured workers. The same situation is also emerging in Alberta where they have an ongoing review.

Similar concerns about the WCB here in PEI have been raised with members of this House

A question to the Premier: What action has government taken to investigate concerns with our Workers Compensation Board?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I'd welcome the hon. member to present or table in this House the information that he's referring to.

The Workers Compensation Board is an independent or an arm's length body from government. We have an interactive relationship with the chair or the board so we'd be happy to take up this question and to pursue it, if there's some evidence that the hon. member would like us to consider.

Thank you.

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

Recourse for injured workers

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

This government has repeatedly expressed how essential it is that government remain connected to the people which it serves and to improve accessibility, accountability, and transparency.

A question to the Premier: What recourse do Islanders, and especially injured workers, have if they feel they have been treated unfairly by a government department or office?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, in the case of workers' compensation, there is a workers' compensation appeal board, and people have the opportunity to pursue that avenue, and they have the opportunity to speak with a case worker or with officials at workers' compensation.

As the hon. member has indicated, members of the public will approach their MLA, and we can be very thankful that we've got 27 MLAs representing across the province so the people can have access to them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ombudsperson's office

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

As I alluded to in my preamble to my first question, a series of reports have clearly demonstrated that there are problems with this process in Ontario and in Alberta, and I suspect here in Prince Edward Island as well.

When this government first came into office in 2007 one of its election promises was the creation of an ombudsperson's office. Currently, Prince Edward Island is the only province or territory in the country without such an office.

Could the Premier tell this House if there are any plans to revisit the creation of an ombudsperson's office and if not, why not?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, as I said in response to the previous question, Prince Edward Islanders have a great advantage in that we have 27 members of the Legislature representing approximately 4,000 people apiece, and those people have access to their MLAs, and I think we're all proud to serve in that role.

Further, I have to go back to the first point that was raised, that there was somehow interference with the professionals in the workers' compensation process. I encourage the member or other members who have evidence along those lines not to be quoting reports from Alberta or somewhere else, but to bring forward that evidence and we'll be happy to address it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Pace of school consultations

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture. The Westisle family of schools Home and School association made a unified presentation at the public meetings at Westisle, as well as the principals.

I heard from many constituents people are worried. All were very critical of the process being used in this review. They pointed out many of their concerns, but a common one is that it's moving too fast.

Since the Westisle family is undergoing a phase two review, which is more in-depth, and with the concerns put forward by these frontline folks, will the minister intervene and slow this process down?

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

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

The Public School Branch is well on their way in reviewing all the families of schools across the Province of Prince Edward Island. I'm very pleased to say that to date we're in step two of a five-step process. We've had

over 200 written submissions about suggestions and ideas, we've had 50 public presentations on ideas and suggestions, and we have also had over 75 individual and small group presentations about ways that we can continue to improve the quality of learning for all students and continue to move our public school system to be one of the top in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, your first supplementary question.

Mr. Murphy: Along with being too fast, they also expressed concern that the process fosters communities pitted against each other and ruining existing relationships, and it creates distraction for students and teachers when they should be focused on student achievement. There are many others but I only have 40 seconds here.

Will the minister have a good look at this process to make sure that these concerns with the process are properly addressed?

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

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

All Members of the Legislative Assembly would agree that one of our most important pillars to prosperity is the quality of our public education, and I will reassure the Member from Alberton-Roseville that we're listening, we're paying attention.

I'm very pleased with the level of conversations. If we're really, truly serious about improving the quality of public education, for equitable access to all kinds of programs, we have to make sure that we have these conversations to make sure that we're moving in the right direction.

Very pleased and look forward to more conversations as we continue to shape the quality of our system.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, your second supplementary question.

Mr. Murphy: There are also concerns with the number of people on the board and that none live in the West Prince area. There are

concerns about the data not being accurate, which makes the projections not accurate.

Minister, will you assure me and the people that I represent that these concerns will be given the attention that they require?

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

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

We are paying very close attention to the information. That's why we're having the public conversations, and I must say the conversations are very open, they're very transparent, and people are engaged.

But these aren't just issues in one part of the province. These are real realities all across the Province of Prince Edward Island. The whole mandate and the process, which is very consistent to every school board across this country, is to continue to improve the quality of learning, to make sure that we are using the resources, and making sure that students that are crossing the stage this June in schools all across Prince Edward Island are getting the best quality education and are competing not only with the best in Canada but the best in the world, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Schools filled to capacity

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question today is also to the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Minister, I, too, have been following the school change policy and there's no secret that there are some schools in the Charlottetown area that are filled to capacity.

What are you as minister of education hoping to achieve with the school change policy in regard to the schools that are filled to capacity?

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

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

As I alluded in a number of questions, the school change policy, which is the mandate of the Public Schools Branch, and as the minister who oversees the *Education Act*, I take that responsibility and very respectful of the mandate that they're doing.

I have one mission, and one mission is to make sure that we continue to provide quality, equitable access to the best programs, the best quality education, that we can provide as a province because I recognize the importance of the public education system and the prosperity and the future of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, during the consultations what concerns are you hearing from the people in overused schools?

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

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

Part of the reality with schools that are seeing shifts in population over decades – because there hasn't really ever been a formal review of boundaries in school boards in this province for probably over 30 years. The issue that presents itself is the issue around class composition, class composition indicating that class sizes are overcapacity, the inability for teachers and students to have a positive learning environment.

The whole mandate of this is to look at ways that we can find better balance, better parity, and address the disproportion and distribution of students across the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, your second supplementary.

Students out of zone schools

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, when my boys went to school, kids in the Lewis Point area were zoned to go to three schools. Some went to Spring Park for French Immersion, some went to West Royalty, and some went to West Kent.

How many students are out of zone and what are the reasons a student would go to school out of zone?

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

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

We have about 1,000 students that are out of zone, but out of respect to the out of zone issue, there are issues that do require students to be placed in other parts of the school.

One of the issues that we are going to be dealing with is trying to find better ways to find balance and parity in all the buildings that we have, but most importantly, the whole objective and the ultimate task is to continue to improve the quality of learning for students all across Prince Edward Island, and educators as well.

I am very committed as the minister, on behalf of all of my government colleagues, to make sure that we are moving markers and continue to be an equality education system that's on the move, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Deleted government email accounts (further)

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the Premier: Did you ever decide that you wanted to tell Islanders whose emails were deleted yet?

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

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

As I did allude and I have committed to making sure that I bring those questions under advisement and bring them back to the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

But I must add I'm very pleased with the response to the Auditor General's report by our department who oversees records information management. We have demonstrated clear action to date. We're reviewing the *Archives and Records Act* with expectation that the revision will be ready for the spring. We've developed a draft action plan along with IT Shared Services staff to ensure compliance with the act. Steps have been also taken to increase records management training for all government employees.

I'm very pleased at the quickness and the response by all this staff to respond to these issues.

Thank you.

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

Wes Sheridan emails

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think one thing this government probably needs to learn and is going to probably learn real quickly is when you keep secrets they always come out, and you have a whole bunch of people working inside government there that are talking right now.

Let's move to the Minister of Finance because it falls under you and you have a lot of people talking right now.

Whatever happened to the emails of Wes Sheridan?

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

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

We take the business of open and transparent government very seriously, and that's why, to my colleagues who have put together a very quick, very professional, and very action-oriented response to all the recommendations from the Auditor General – and I must say that I am extremely proud of my department who oversees record information management – to make sure that we send a message to Islanders that we take the work of the Auditor General very seriously.

I'm looking forward to presenting to this House the five-year strategy to demonstrate very clearly that we will continue to improve the ways and modernize how we keep records into the future, Mr. Speaker.

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

Melissa MacEachern emails

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm certainly dizzy with the runaround I'm getting. This government is quite deep into this cover up. The Premier is elbows deep. He won't answer any of my questions on what happened to Robert Ghiz's emails, what happened to West Sheridan's emails, what happened to Chris LeClair's emails. The Minister of Finance, it falls under him because it's his people who care for the servers. If they were deleted they had to be deleted out of his shop, and he won't answer it, though everybody in his department is talking about it. So he'd better answer it soon because it's going to get answered on the street for him.

Question again to the Minister of Finance: Whatever became of the emails of Melissa MacEachern?

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

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

As I indicated, I will bring information forward to the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters. But I must add, once again, that to date the action and response to the recommendations has been swift, has been timely, has been professional, and we'll

continue to move records information management in a direction that we're modernized to put us at a level with every province and jurisdiction across this country.

To date, we've got 10 new record retention schedules that were approved in October. We are exploring the adoption of electronic records management (Indistinct) and hoping a pilot this fall - this fall. A secondary provincial records centre is expected to open to respond and to professionalize the responsibilities and mandate that we have to oversee records information management, and we're committed to improving the policies and standards and enforce that legislation moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Capital Budget bridge replacement

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I noticed in the Capital Budget – question to the minister of transportation – that next year's budget is the same as last year's budget for bridges. Just wondering how many bridges you're looking to replace on Prince Edward Island next year?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Every year we do a review of all the bridges across, and assessments, to keep on top of setting priorities. From time to time there are other bridges that come up that are necessary to replace.

But in our Capital Budget we do maintain the same level going forward, and we will be talking about those as part of our Capital Budget discussions.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Out-of-service bridges

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister of transportation: How many of these bridges are you planning on taking out of service next year?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At the present time there are a number of bridges that are restricted for use across Prince Edward Island. We actually just sent a notice out about the North Lake Bridge. But on a yearly basis we review those and make a determination as to what is the safest, and any other alternate route that is nearest we take that into account as well. We will continue to review the safety of all bridges on Prince Edward Island.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Grove Pine Road bridge

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister of transportation. I know there was a bridge burnt on the Grove Pine Road that your department did not replace and this is a bridge that farmers used a lot, first responders used a lot. I noticed it's not replaced yet.

Is your department planning on replacing the bridge on the Grove Pine Road?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at those particular situations we do take into account the alternate route that is available to travel and the distance as well. When we make those determinations we take all that into account. If there's another way to get there that is within a range that is not exorbitantly out of the way, then we also take that into account.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, final question.

North Lake bridge

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If it was a bridge to Charlottetown, it would be built. But this is not. In rural PEI we have bridges for farmers, we have bridges for

first-responders. Not for people who (Indistinct) Charlottetown.

Now that you mention it, minister of transportation, you mentioned the North Lake bridge, which I wasn't going to bring up. Are you going to replace the North Lake bridge?

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

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about the bridges in rural PEI that we have replaced this past year.

We did the gulley bridge in Cascumpec area. We did the Cascumpec bridge which will be opening next week. We did a bridge down in Kelly's Cross. We did an \$8 million bridge down in Souris.

We will continue to review the bridges as necessary across Prince Edward Island as part of our bridge replacement structure program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Ministers

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

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Purple Ribbon Campaign)

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very pleased today to rise and talk about a very important campaign that we are honouring today in Prince Edward Island, and I want to also encourage those watching and listening today to join me in recognizing today as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Every year on November 25th individuals and women's groups all over the world make their collective effort to raise awareness of violence against women.

Sadly, this annual recognition must continue because of the problem that still persists against women.

According to United Nations statistics, one in three women worldwide – so we better look in our gallery here, we have four women – so one in three women experience physical or sexual violence, often at the hands of their partner.

We can all agree that it is unacceptable that domestic violence is so common. We must continue to work together to end this worldwide pandemic.

Today also is the official launch of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women Purple Ribbon Campaign. To show solidarity I am wearing mine, but I also am pleased that all of the members of this Legislature are also showing that solidarity by wearing their purple ribbons as well.

The Purple Ribbon Campaign started on the Island in 1991 and was organized by the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women to remember the 14 women murdered in the Montreal Massacre, and to raise awareness about violence against women.

This year's Purple Ribbon Campaign theme is: Believe survivors.

I would like to recognize some of the representatives from the Advisory Council on the Status of Women that are with us today in the gallery, and they include: Jane Ledwell, our executive director, Mari Basiletti, the chairperson, as well in the gallery we have Dawn Wilson from the PEI Coalition for Women in Government, and I know they work tirelessly across Prince Edward Island on behalf of women.

It is important to recognize the issue of violence against women today and every day. I encourage everyone to please wear their purple ribbons today to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and wear them through to December 6th which is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, which we will also recognize. I will encourage everyone to keep their ribbons on during that period and to save them for the Family Violence Prevention Week in February.

I want to ask that we make a commitment, all of us, to our daughters, granddaughters, nieces, mothers, aunts, and loved ones, that

we will continue to fight for the elimination of violence against women.

Later this afternoon I will be attending a gathering at The Guild, and it's to release a film called *Singing to Myself*, a film that explores the aftermath of violence and is described as an intimate gaze into the complexity and ease of female friendships.

I want to congratulate the director, Harmony Wagner, as well as Sophie MacLean and Bryde MacLean who star in that film.

I want to also encourage our male counterparts here in the Legislature at 6:00 p.m. at The Guild. The Man Up group will be gathering to have a walk to stand in solidarity with the women across Prince Edward Island in making a pledge to work towards the elimination of violence against women.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do recognize and appreciate the words from the minister. It's very important that we recognize the launch of the Purple Ribbon Campaign.

I also want to acknowledge that we have Jane and Mari and Dawn in the gallery with us today, tireless workers for all women's issues.

We talk about the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. It was December 1999 the United Nations General Assembly designated November 25th as that day. Women's activists have marked the 25th of November as a day against violence since 1981. This day came from the brutal assassination in 1960 of three Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic.

I ask your indulgence as I want to read into the record of this House the clauses from that UN resolution:

“Concerned that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace, as recognized in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women...” and the platform for action for the Fourth World Conference on Women which recognized and recommended a set of integral measures to (Indistinct) the elimination of violence against women, and the full implementation of the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Concerned, also, “...that some groups of women, such as women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, [the girl child], women with disabilities, elderly women and women in situations of armed conflict, are especially vulnerable to violence...”

“...Recognizing that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men...”

Recognizing also that the human rights of women and of the girl child are inalienable, integral, and indivisible parts of universal human rights, and recognizing further the need to promote and protect all human rights of women and girls.

Alarmed that women do not fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and concerned about the long-standing failure to protect and promote these rights and freedoms in relation to violence against women.

Recognizing with satisfaction the cooperation provided by the relevant agencies, bodies, funds, and organizations of the United Nation system to different countries in the fight to eradicate violence against women in fulfillment of their respective mandates.

Recognizing the efforts made by civil society and non-governmental organizations that have contributed to creating a worldwide social conscience of the negative impact both on social and on economic life of violence against women.

Reiterating that according to the Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women: “...the term ‘violence against women’ means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence.

I’m proud to stand today and raise public awareness for the problems of violence against women.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It was my pleasure last Thursday to join you across the road in the Murphy’s Centre with the board members of the advisory council and many other volunteers, actually, as we put together the cards and the ribbons that we’re wearing today. It was a really lovely community event.

As the member, the representative in this House of a party for whom one of our founding principles is to create a culture of peace, the ending of violence is of course something which is of utmost importance to me.

Violence is always unacceptable. Violence can be, as we find out all too often, deadly. I was really pleased that the minister in her statement, as well as asking us to look around the room at the women here, mentioned the men at the end because it is the men, the male gender, from where that violence comes and we have to look there perhaps more so than we do at the women, the victims of violence.

There has been much talk in the House this session about anger, and anger has been expressed in this House. Anger can be awful. Unrestrained anger can be deadly. But anger directed at the right person at the right time for the right reason in the right degree to the end can be something very impressive, but that sort of mastery of anger – which is an absolutely universal, natural human instinct – is a rare thing, and it's when anger explodes unchecked and unconstrained that violence erupts.

I applaud the work of the advisory council in all that they do to end violence in our world.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

TIAPEI AGM

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today the Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island, or TIAPEI, is holding its annual general meeting.

This morning the association presented members with Vision 2021, a proposed five-year strategy for the tourism industry in our province. The strategy outlined suggestions for where the tourism industry should go from marketing, organizational, and product development perspectives.

TIAPEI held extensive consultations from one end of the province to the other, and the amount of feedback it received from industry is unprecedented. Because of that, we see Vision 2021 as a very powerful, actionable document.

Over the coming weeks we will engage the industry on how to move forward from proposal to action. We will look at possible new organizational structures for the industry. We will examine new revenue streams to enhance our marketing and product offerings, and we will look for opportunities to extend the season. We will do this with work in concert with industry.

We have just experienced a third consecutive record season for tourism on

Prince Edward Island. Early projections for 2016 indicate a total revenue of close to \$430 million, a 6% increase over 2015. A projection for total visitation is 1.5 million, a 6.9% increase over last year. Overnight stays are up 11% over last year, and through October we have already exceeded the total number of overnight stays for all of 2015.

For a small Island we have a very big tourism industry that is vital to the economy of Prince Edward Island. We continue to surprise the world with the quality experience that we offer visitors. Our tourism operators are held in very high regard in jurisdictions across the country. In a lot of ways we are the envy of the industry nationally, but we cannot rest on our laurels.

I look forward to the continued partnership and cooperation as we move to take action on the recommendations in the new five-year strategy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By the privilege last night of going to the Kensington chamber awards banquet I toured around and talked to a lot of the tourism operators, and it was certainly a good year. There was a lot of excitement behind them, a lot of hype. Everybody I talked to seemed to have had a great summer, so they were excited about it.

I always give credit where credit's due. There are certainly some great things happening on Prince Edward Island right now. We've had the privilege of touring around over the summer to the different events, and it's great to see large amounts of tourists coming to these events and the department trying new ideas.

I certainly agree that they're on the right path and doing right things. The only negative thing I can say – I'm all about I like people, everybody being treated fair – and touring the Island and hearing all the good news stories, I have heard some bad news stories from some of the tourism operators

in Kings County. They certainly haven't had great numbers down there from some of the ones I've talked to. Their concern – a lot of it comes back to the ferry and the shortage of ferry service going.

If I can make a suggestion to the minister, put some emphasis on helping some of those tourism operators in Kings County, and hopefully they can have as good a summer as everyone else on Prince Edward Island next year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Of course, it's always good news when tourism is doing well on Prince Edward Island, particularly in rural districts like the one I represent, Kellys Cross-Cumberland.

As much as I appreciate the talk of branding and product marketing and strategies and all of those things, I think we have to remember that the competitive advantage that we have if we want to promote Prince Edward Island as a unique destination is that we're not like anywhere else in the world. We are unique, and the more that we try and make ourselves, like the rest of the world, by bringing in box stores and developing in the customary conventional manner, I think we lose the competitive advantage we have that this is a special place.

We cannot control the weather, we cannot control the exchange rate, there are many things that we can't do which have a profound impact on tourism on Prince Edward Island. But what we can control is the way that we develop Prince Edward Island and make sure that it exudes the charm and the character and the unique things that make Prince Edward Island special.

We can, I think, recreate the Prince Edward Island that was: the one that is imbued with the characters of friendliness, of neighbourliness, of inclusion, and of support. That, I think, is where the real opportunity for Prince Edward Island to

reach its full potential as a tourism destination lies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Summerside-Wilmot, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 50, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. minister, could you give us a brief explanation as to what this bill means?

Ms. Biggar: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'll try to be as brief as I can.

There are a number of changes within this particular bill to one of our most important pieces of legislation and that's the *Highway Traffic Act*.

One of the measures deals with amending the definition of a bicycle to a more modern version. Another item deals with unnecessary noise by prohibiting the use of engine brakes in commercial vehicles in specific speed zones and at certain times of day.

Other measures deal with impaired driving. We'll increase the minimum mandatory ignition term for those convicted of a second impaired driving offence from one to five years, and we will amend the zero blood alcohol tolerance and zero drug tolerance for

drivers below the age of 18 to all drivers below the age of 22. And we propose allowing short-term roadside driver license suspensions to be added to a driver's abstract.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 51, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. minister, I will ask you to give us an explanation of this Bill No. 51.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to the current motor vehicle impoundment laws that are in place under various offences under the Criminal Code, we propose to add a vehicle impoundment authority for short-term roadside driver license suspensions and a 30-day vehicle impoundment for first and second impaired driving offences.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2017* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2017*, Bill No. 54, read a first time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2017*, is the legislation accompanying the budgetary plan put forward in my House statement from yesterday. We'll be dealing with it in more detail when we bring it on the floor for a second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2)* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 56, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. Premier, could you just give us an explanation as to what Bill 56 entails?

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, these amendments will remove the monetary limit on orders concerning unpaid wages and will provide greater consistency on the wording of the subsections.

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 15th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 15, *An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act*, Bill No. 45, ordered for third reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: Bill 46?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: Yeah, it's Order 15.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 16th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No, 16, *An Act to Amend the Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act*, Bill No. 46, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act*, Bill No. 46, read a second time.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will now call on the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to Chair the bill.

Chair (Perry): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Mr. Trivers: Yes, please.

Mr. Roach: I'd like to invite someone on the floor, a stranger.

Chair: Permission to invite a stranger to the floor.

Mr. Trivers: Granted.

Chair: Would you please state your name and position for the Hansard, please?

Nigel Burns Director: Nigel Burns, director with the Department of Finance.

Chair: Hon. Minister of Finance will you please give us a brief overview?

Mr. Roach: Yes, Mr. Chair.

The *Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act*, the program, was developed out of the recommendations from the Rural Action Plan that was released in 2010.

Specifically, under the goal support community development and capacity building, action 24: creating community economic development investment funds. This is more commonly referred to as the Community Economic Development Business program, CEDB.

The program is an equity finance program, not a loan or a grant program. Investors receive a 35% provincial personal income tax credit up to a maximum of \$20,000 of investment, equivalent to a \$7,000 tax credit, that can be carried forward and backward to offset provincial income tax owing.

Mr. Trivers: Per year.

Mr. Roach: Investments are also eligible for RRSP tax deferral. Investments have to be held for a five-year period to receive the full value of the tax credits. The target businesses to use this program are the start-

up and expansion of small businesses across rural PEI that may be facing challenges accessing traditional lines of credit financing without some equity in the business venture.

The CEDB program provides businesses with greater access to local equity financing which can be used to access traditional credit sources. The current maximum revenue threshold for a business to be registered under the act is \$25 million.

The amendment that we're proposing would raise that revenue threshold from \$25 million to \$50 million.

The motivation behind his proposal is for the threshold to keep pace with the growth in sales by small to medium-sized businesses here on PEI. The focus on increasing the value of Island exports of goods and services to other provinces and to other countries is producing real results.

Since the community development equity tax credit program was designed in 2010, this province has seen a 30% gain in exports, or nearly three-quarters of a million dollars. The growth in exports and the depreciation of the US dollar compared to Canada has resulted in the need to revisit that threshold.

All of that was already in place, we're just increasing the threshold to provide more opportunity for small businesses.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, you referenced small businesses. What is your definition of small businesses that fall under this?

Mr. Roach: Go ahead.

Nigel Burns Director: There are thresholds within the act. A labour threshold, I believe it's 100 full-time year-round employees and \$25 million in assets.

Leader of the Opposition: So the threshold is 100 employees on a year-round basis, right?

Nigel Burns Director: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: How many companies on PEI fall under that? Because I can't think of very many small businesses that have 100 employees on a year-round basis.

Mr. Roach: It doesn't necessarily have to be all year-round because there are some businesses – for example, you could have – there are a number of companies that are outside of the greater Charlottetown area and greater Summerside area that certainly do employ. You could have – that would include, for example, all your seafood processing plants. It would also include some agriculture programs, as well, for some of the larger ones that you could find around the Island.

Leader of the Opposition: I don't believe that. If I think of small businesses outside of Charlottetown that are 100 people or more employed, I can't think of any, besides Cavendish Farms –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)–

Ms. Biggar: Trout River.

Leader of the Opposition: Trout River would employ 100 people or more?

Mr. Roach: Tignish Co-op, Trout River. I mean a number of these companies.

Ms. Biggar: Royal Star.

Mr. Roach: It helps them grow.

Leader of the Opposition: If we're talking small businesses –

Mr. Roach: There's no – like, I mean, when you look at it – correct me if I'm wrong here – but there's no real advantage. The advantage is to the community or to the business.

Nigel Burns Director: These are the upper thresholds, so being below, with the idea that you can grow up to, but once you've reach the threshold you're no longer a small (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: So it doesn't exclude businesses that are below 100 people?

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) question.

Nigel Burns Director: Where can these –

Mr. Roach: Like where can a small business – what's their threshold before they can –

Nigel Burns Director: If you want to look to the income tax – small business, for the small business rate would be up to half a million dollars of corporate income tax. That's a larger (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: So, I guess, here's the question –

Mr. Roach: His question is: If I have a small business, do I have to have 100 people before I qualify?

Nigel Burns Director: Oh, no.

Mr. Roach: Let's get that straight.

Nigel Burns Director: You could start with – starting with a – start-ups –

Mr. Roach: Start-up companies.

Nigel Burns Director: – you might have zero, but (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: It's up to 100.

Mr. Roach: It's up to 100.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Why does it jump from the \$25 million to the \$50 million, just for curiosity's sake?

Mr. Roach: When it first came out in 2010 our exports were, say, here.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Mr. Roach: Now that we've been encouraging all of our small businesses through different programs, for example, that came out of Economic Development and Tourism to get in to the export market, we've had people travelling from government, travelling and working with a lot of small businesses from East Point to

North Cape, encouraging them to get into the export business because that's where we're seeing a lot of growth now.

Between 2010 and 2016 those exports have really taken off. That's why we've seen the huge numbers in our exports. Every year they've been increasing. This is to enable those companies –

Leader of the Opposition: Just keep up the pace.

Mr. Roach: – to keep pace with what's going on so rather than coming in here every year and looking for another \$5 million and another \$5 million. This just takes it from the original one in 2010 and bringing it up to 2016 standards. It's good for a lot of them. It's a good tax incentive program for investment and companies.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I guess a dual question here: How many community economic development businesses are there in PEI, and can you list them?

Mr. Roach: List all of the businesses?

Leader of the Opposition: Can you provide us with a list?

Mr. Roach: We can try to get a list of all businesses in PEI, but –

Leader of the Opposition: I'm thinking that how many community economic development businesses are there, yes, back with a list if you could.

Mr. Roach: A list of all of the businesses in PEI?

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Mr. Roach: We can try to get that. I'm sure we can get that through.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to commend the minister for updating this act. I really believe in the *Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act* and the things it does. This is exactly the sort of tax credit that I have been talking about all the time. I know the one that I wanted to introduce is an out-of-province self-employment income tax credit that fills a different area. This is small business. I want the self-employment one.

But a good example – I know you have been talking about that with the Leader of the Opposition – is Solar Island Electric which was started by Renewable Lifestyles's Steve Howard. It was specifically to allow people to invest in a company so they could qualify for this tax credit and still get their solar panels installed at the same time. What it ends up being is really in many ways a subsidy for installing solar energy and letting Island companies do that, so it's fantastic, and I did want to commend you for raising the amount to \$50 million.

I would almost question why you would even want to put a big limit on that, like any limit at all, and maybe you could tell me why you want to put a limit. What's the reason for putting a limit on it?

Mr. Roach: I think we have to – as a guess to a certain point, we have to look at the size of the companies and their growth and whether there really is a need any more to assist that company in growth, but \$50 million is very substantial.

Mr. Trivers: I mean, I would argue, because of the other criteria you have in the act in that same clause 5 where you're paying, what is it?, 75% of the wages have to be on the Island and these sorts of things, these sorts of criteria can only help PEI's economy whether it's a \$50 million company or a \$100 million company or a \$1 billion company. If we get that money to stay in the Island economy that is just paramount to helping our economy.

Mr. Roach: As it progresses, maybe five or six years from now we may have to look at the (Indistinct) threshold again.

Mr. Trivers: That's the one comment I have on this is I think you shouldn't put it at

\$50 million. I would like to see it at \$100 million or \$500 million even if you feel there's (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: Well, we will take that under consideration.

Mr. Trivers: Just because it's so important, and it really will allow Islanders to take their money and keep it on the Island and cause Island companies to grow. It's just such (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: That's why I think it is a good program. We are seeing some good uptake so Islanders are the ones that are investing in Island businesses.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So is there – have you don't the math and can you – when you look at the cost benefit analysis, for every dollar that goes into a company that qualified for the CEDB program, how much of that stays on the Island or even with spin-off effects, how much many more dollars does that generate in the Island economy? Have you done that analysis? (Indistinct) I know it.

Nigel Burns Director: We can look at the amount of money raised and invested under the program and we can look at maybe trying to assess whether with or without this program could that venture have proceeded, but it is difficult to measure the counterfactual of without this program could this initiative found other financing to proceed?

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Where I'm going with this is I would argue that in fact there's really very little – no cost to government of these sorts of tax credits because in the end it benefits the economy so much. Those are the figures I would really like to get my hands on, and I know there has been a lot of research done.

I was hoping government would have those figures because what we see government doing time and time again is what I refer to as the fog bank, the friends of government bank, where you have a connection, you get money granted to you before you have the

company started, and you're trying to pick and choose winners.

I've said this before, it's very subjective, in my opinion, where these are companies who are working on their own merit and as individuals using money they have already earned and they are receiving a tax credit back. It's just so far superior. Again, I would strongly urge you to increase that \$50 million and make as many companies eligible for this program as possible.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, what's in it for the small business, like, with the five employees that exports 70% of their business off Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Roach: Yeah, they can still apply for it. What it would mean for them is if you have a small business, let's say five employees or 10 or seven, as you suggested, if there were people in that community that wanted to invest in that company or people within the company itself that wanted to invest in that company, they can, say, put \$10,000 as an example. They could put \$10,000, \$20,000 into the company and they would get a tax credit on \$10,000 immediately of \$3,500 right off the bat. That money would have to stay in the company for five years before they could pull that money back out for their return.

It's a good advantage in that you're investing in a company in your small town and the money is staying in that small town, and staying in that company, and it's within a group of people within that community. The big advantage is if you have five people and they invested \$10,000 each, each one of them would immediately get \$3,500 back on that investment the first year.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

The bigger the company – it doesn't go by the size of the company? It goes by how much you invest?

Mr. Roach: Yeah.

Mr. LaVie: Yeah? It doesn't go by if there are 100 employees and I invest –

Mr. Roach: It doesn't matter. You could have five –

Mr. LaVie: Just (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: – or you could have a brand-new start-up company.

Mr. LaVie: It's just how much I invest?

Mr. Roach: Yeah. It's available to the small businesses.

Mr. LaVie: Up to \$50 million, is it?

Mr. Roach: Up to \$50 million.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Two questions, minister. How does this bill relate to the government's decision to take over SRDC and CADC?

Mr. Roach: It doesn't relate.

Mr. MacKay: It doesn't? Oh.

Mr. Roach: No.

Mr. MacKay: Okay. That's great. That's good, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, thank you, Chair.

I was wondering when it comes to the share price of a company that qualifies for the CEDB program, does the share price fluctuate as a normal incorporated traded company would? I know a lot of companies, they don't have to be publicly traded but they would be private shareholders. Would it fluctuate in the normal manner of a company or do you require that the price that a person buys into the company with

will be the same price after five years, for example?

Nigel Burns Director: The value of those shares is dependent on the underlying value of the investment.

Mr. Trivers: Right. Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Basically what you're saying is the share price can fluctuate up or down based on how well the company is doing? Which is the normal case for an incorporated entity. So in fact it is the investors who are putting the money in that are assuming the risk. Again, it's another case of it's the investors making the risk. It's not government taking the risk. This is such a great program.

Let's not cap it at any amount. I would even question why you're eliminating professional business practices – professional businesses incorporated, as you say, in the legislation for an accountant, dentist, lawyer or medical doctor, veterinarian or chiropractor. Because, again, it's Islanders that are assuming the risk and they're investing in those. Why that limitation?

Mr. Roach: We're trying to help these small community businesses –

Mr. Trivers: Right. Maybe you could expand on that. As far as I'm concerned that's (Indistinct) to the small community businesses, the same as –

Mr. Roach: I think there needs to be – in many of the other areas that you've spoken about, there are other avenues there for those professional services.

Mr. Trivers: I just want to voice my opinion again. I think that we should lower the limitations on this. It keeps Islanders' money on PEI instead of investing in off-Island companies. Again, it's them that are taking the risk, Islanders that are investing in CDB program taking the risk, there's no risk to government. I think you should really take a look at this bill.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Roach: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Roach: I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same without amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 7th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 7, *Procurement of Goods Act*, Bill No. 36, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Procurement of Goods Act*, Bill No. 36, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale to come and Chair this bill.

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

An Hon. Member: We better, a new bill.

Chair: New bill, very serious.

I'll ask the minister to give an overview of the bill.

Mr. Roach: Can I have a stranger to come to the floor?

Chair: He'd like to bring a stranger on the floor.

An Hon. Member: Granted.

Chair: I would ask the stranger to introduce himself when he sits down.

Ian Burge Manager: Ian Burge, manager of procurement services.

Chair: I'll ask the minister to give an overview.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Chair, this bill is intended to replace the *Public Purchasing Act*.

Updating some of the legislation would expand roles and definitions to enhance the procurement process for government departments and all of its entities. It would also more closely reflect the changes made by other regional jurisdictions, and it will better align us with current trade agreements.

Chair: Questions?

Mr. Trivers: Read clause by clause.

Chair: 1. (1) In this Act,

(a) "buying group" means a group purchasing organization that obtains the best pricing for its members from suppliers, based on volume;

(b) "goods" means moveable property, such as raw materials, products –

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: In this section 1(1)(a), it states that a buying group "means a group purchasing organization that obtains the best pricing for its members from suppliers, based on volume."

Right away, you're setting two criteria there, it's only pricing and it's only volume. I think in many cases there are a lot of other criteria to take into account other than just pricing and there's other ways to negotiate pricing and not just volume. I'm wondering why you restrict it to those areas.

Ian Burge Manager: The buying groups presently right now are used by different organizations within government, different entities. What they're used for now is trying to buy large commodity items and there could be specifications within that offer, but most times it's to kind of get the best value based on economies of scale.

Mr. Trivers: Right, most times. But I mean, when you're putting this in legislation, then you define it as specifically obtaining the best pricing for its members, I think that restricts it.

I think there are other reasons why buying groups not exist – this may be the prime reason they exist – but there are other ways that they can add value to the procurement process. I wanted to make sure that's not limited.

Of course, one of the ways that I think they can add value is by buying local, for example, buying products that are high

quality or higher quality, these sorts of things. A buying group could be able to make that decision based on the area they represent just as well as they could for pricing and volume reasons.

I don't know if you would need an amendment for that, or is that something you would consider changing?

Mr. Roach: I'd certainly bring that back to the ones who wrote this, bring that to their attention.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, minister. I understand that that is traditionally the reason the buying group exists. But again, I don't want it to be limited to that. That's what worries me when it's written in legislation that way.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm curious. Why don't we have a clause in the province under this *Procurement of Goods Act* that – like in some provinces (Indistinct) some jurisdictions they have a 1% or a 2% or 3% clause, that if there's a company within the Island that is over the bid, the lowest tender by 1% to 2% or 3%, that the province has the authority to give that local company that purchasing of tender or whatever.

Why don't we have something in here to protect our small businesses like that?

Mr. Roach: We do have a similar clause to that in PEI, but I think it's for goods that are manufactured.

Leader of the Opposition: Why can't we expand that clause into the *Procurement of Goods Act* that would allow that on PEI for whatever we buy?

Mr. Roach: I think that's for the other provinces. That is the intention of this.

Leader of the Opposition: So that's in there, then, minister? I don't see it.

Mr. Roach: That's addressed in the regulations.

Leader of the Opposition: Do we use it very often? Prime example would be the

purchasing of food for the hospitals and the health compared to (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: One of the things that has to be considered is that we are bound by trade agreements with other provinces. Within those agreements, if we start to restrict, then what we'll do is we'll – they can then do the same thing, and we'd be restricting our companies on Prince Edward Island that supply out there, because those are trade agreements that are signed with other provinces.

Leader of the Opposition: I understand that, minister, but to my understanding the Province of Quebec does it.

Mr. Myers: They all do it.

Mr. Roach: No, we have an Atlantic trade agreement.

Leader of the Opposition: A what?

Mr. Roach: We have an Atlantic purchasing agreement. It's between –

Leader of the Opposition: So it's the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova –

Mr. Roach: Quebec is not in our agreement.

Leader of the Opposition: So the Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia do not have a clause in that?

Mr. Roach: We all have - our policies are almost identical, our acts.

Leader of the Opposition: Do they allow the 1% or 5%, or whatever the number would be to purchase?

Mr. Roach: I think (Indistinct).

Ian Burge Manager: In the regulations for other provinces, they do allow for a preference clause up to the applicable trade agreement threshold. Right now the threshold for goods in the Atlantic Procurement Agreement is \$10,000. They could allow for a preference clause up to the Atlantic Procurement Agreement threshold based on the dollar value of the tender, not per line.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Roach: What we have in there, as was just stated, for goods, the threshold is \$10,000. For services it's \$50,000 and for construction it's \$100,000.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

My questions are along the same lines as the Leader of the Opposition, which is potential conflicts with existing agreements and compatibility with existing agreements. The Atlantic Procurement Agreement, I know, limits that you've just said when it comes to products – \$10,000 is the limit.

We had recently on the Island a gentleman who was promoting the idea of a greater procurement within our school system of local food. The \$10,000 limit there is going to completely – it will make that initiative impossible, actually.

My question is: In a situation like this, does the Atlantic Procurement Agreement supersede anything locally or provincially that we produce?

Ian Burge Manager: It's an agreement that – the provinces signed on to a party. So if we have to follow along with – the Atlantic Procurement Agreement, for example, is PEI plus New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland.

The agreement is the threshold of \$10,000 is: anything under \$10,000 is not under claim of the agreement. Above the \$10,000, if there is a procurement over \$10,000, then the agreement kicks into play. Then what happens is other jurisdictions can complain that they're not being treated fairly.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: What I hear, then, is that the agreements that we have signed onto here, particularly the Atlantic Procurement Agreement, would preclude us from actually creating a local food act that would mandate that we buy a certain amount of our food from Island farmers. Am I correct in saying that?

Chair: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The local food act we're working on at the present time will deal with the issues you're talking about, hon. member. We're meeting with the other provinces right across Canada who have local food acts to find out exactly what they have in theirs.

We want to move ahead on this. We expect legislation to be in place with a new local food act here by 2018, so we'll deal with your issues here.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm still unclear as to whether the Atlantic Procurement Agreement would supersede any local food act or procurement act that we're discussing now. That's what I'm not sure –

Mr. McIsaac: That's one of the issues that will be dealt with when we're getting – that's why the legislation won't be in place. We can't put it in tomorrow. We'd love to have in place tomorrow, but there are things that we have to look at with regards to that issue and certain others in finding out exactly the best way of putting this in place.

There is that land trade agreement, as well, that we have to look at, but we're really excited about that act coming in place.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm really excited about it as well, minister, and I'm in full support of its intent, anyway.

Do I hear you saying that it's possible that we may be reopening the Atlantic procurement act in order to change the terms to accommodate a local food act or this act that we're discussing now?

Mr. McIsaac: We are looking into that whole issue with regards to – I'm not opening any trade agreements at the present time. We're just exploring the whole issue as to what other provinces have in place, and I'm not going to preempt what may be in the act, but that is one of the issues that we will be looking at over the next two years.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Burge, you came to the Public Accounts Committee on October 5th and did a great presentation. We reviewed the Atlantic Procurement Agreement and went through it in detail and we appreciate you coming out as a witness there.

Some things we found out are that, in fact, monitoring of the agreement is done passively by a committee that's made up of people from the Maritime Provinces. I believe you sit on that committee. Is that correct?

Ian Burge Manager: That's correct.

Mr. Trivers: That's right. I believe what you said was that in the last eight years you've sat on the committee there hasn't been a single challenge that any tender has violated the Atlantic Procurement Agreement. Is that correct?

Ian Burge Manager: That's correct.

Mr. Trivers: That's right. I would submit that given the passive nature of the way the agreement is monitored, there's really nothing to stop the province from putting in regulations that allow the purchasing of local food. Would you concur with that statement?

Mr. Roach: I'd think I'd refer back to the comments made by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries that they are looking at a local act that would encompass those things that you are referring to.

Chair: (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

In addition, one of the things we found out at committee, minister, was that it's actually encouraged by the Atlantic Procurement Agreement and the members of that agreement to put in detailed specifications for goods and services.

For example, if there is a product that's superior in health or quality, then this should be specified in the tender for that product or service, and that actually would help, in some cases, procurement of local products.

The example that was given by the Leader of the Opposition was poultry on the Island.

In many cases we have local poultry that has less water added to it, it's medication-free, it's cage-less. If you put in those sort of specifications in a procurement tender, then in fact it allows you to buy local and there's absolutely no ramifications that would be caused with the Atlantic Procurement Agreement.

I guess my question is: Why wouldn't regulations – or can you commit to making sure regulations do encourage that sort of practice?

Mr. Roach: Again, I think it's a very good question, but I think within that – that comes right down to the tender. If the tender goes out and it specifies that there are certain things that have to be in there –

Mr. Trivers: Right, no, that's a great point –

Mr. Roach: If the tender goes out and it specifies it has to be certain things, then when the tenders come back and you do your review they have to have (Indistinct), if they don't have it –

Mr. Trivers: That is an extremely good point, minister. This is why I have so many questions about the provincial protein tender that's put out through the Department of Health and Wellness. Because indeed not only does it not specify down to a good enough detail in my opinion of the products – or the goods and services should be purchased – in this case protein, provincial protein for 17 institutions – but in fact it actually lists preferences for off-Island companies and off-Island products.

I don't know, maybe this is a better question for the minister of health, and I don't know if he wants to have input into that right now, but I would urge you as Minister of Finance who's overseeing the new *Procurement of Goods Act* to add the regulations and clarify the regulations and make sure that people in the department of health who are procuring things like protein in fact do make the tender specific and do try and think about buying local.

Mr. Roach: I will say that I certainly am not in a position to know what the department of health would require to be (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: Working together.

Mr. Roach: Based on your question, I'd certainly be willing to have that conversation with the appropriate minister.

Mr. Trivers: That'd be great. Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mine are along the same kind of lines here. I think that you need to do more to protect our local interests in procurement. The other provinces are doing it. Nova Scotia does it. New Brunswick does it.

It's almost impossible for us to do business there. Talk to some of the business people there that are doing it. Talk to construction people who are doing it. Talk to the IT people who are doing it. They don't get treated well at all in other provinces and they're trying to keep the work in their own provinces when it's the public sector money.

Here we have millions of dollars in an IT system down at workers comp went off-Island. The design for our website was done by a company from Ontario. Then they went to – it went RFP and the same company that designed the RFP bid on the RFP and won the RFP and did the RFP. Oh yeah.

Here we have local companies that could do it, and you wonder why people are frustrated. This is public money. Why wouldn't you do some more to protect the interests? Why wouldn't you make it so you have to have local content, that you have to have 10% local – that, at the very least, forces them to partner with somebody on the ground here on Prince Edward Island?

While we may not have an IT company, though we would, we'd have two or three of them that could bid on a \$10 million or \$15 million project. It would open the doors for somebody who wants to come in and bid on a \$10 million project here on Prince Edward Island, they have to partner with a small local IT firm, which does a few things.

It helps bring extra dollars to a smaller firm here and it would help on that front. What it would also do is it would, if it was a new

and upcoming technology, it would allow us to have, on the ground here on Prince Edward Island, people trained with experience in those types of things.

You only have to look at DeltaWare and how their success has been built by having the Oracle contract with government. Their Oracle expertise is basically built from the fact that they had that contract with government for the last twenty-some years. Now they're able to go to oil refineries in Newfoundland, they have contracts there. They have contracts up north. They have contracts all over the place, which has been great for Prince Edward Island, right?

Why aren't we trying to do the same thing? We have emerging technologies and government departments are putting RFPs out to take in – to get a piece of work done, I really think in any industry, regardless of what the industry is, there should be, always, a local content. Always a local content. It forces them to partner on the ground.

What we consider small business here is really small compared to what would be small business in Ontario. Those small businesses that come here from Ontario are big businesses here. They're hard to compete against and we just can't. It's just too hard for us to compete against the companies of the size that they would have there.

If we forced them to partner with our small companies, it would be beneficial to everyone. Government would still get the best price. You'd get your work done, but you'd build an expertise on the ground and you'd help businesses grow. Whether it be accounting, or carpentry, it really doesn't matter.

I truly believe that there has to be some provision for local content in every government department because it's the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island's money.

Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll first comment on the question and then I'll comment on the statement. It's a good question and it's a reasonable statement.

First of all, as to the question that you posed early in your speech, if there are companies on Prince Edward Island specifically that you're aware of that were not treated fairly when they were bidding on contracts outside the province, we would love to have that information.

Mr. Myers: Okay.

Mr. Roach: We have this gentleman here who sits on that board. We'll challenge that.

Mr. Myers: Okay.

Mr. Roach: Through the trade agreements we're allowed to challenge other provinces on the way they've treated our businesses. If there are companies, I would encourage you to ask them to come forward and we'll definitely follow-up on that.

Mr. Myers: I will (Indistinct).

Mr. Roach: With respect to a lot of the comments that you made about local content, and your comments specifically around DeltaWare – and I think that's a great example – the trade agreement is also what allows our DeltaWares to go out and be successful in other provinces because they can't cut DeltaWare off because of that trade agreement.

I appreciate everything you said, very much, so thank you for those comments.

Chair: Having nobody else on my list, I'll proceed to read.

(b) "goods" means moveable property, such as raw materials, products or equipment, whether in solid, liquid, gaseous or electronic form, but does not include moveable property procured as part of a general construction contract;

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was looking down at the list of definitions for this *Procurement of Goods Act* and you do define goods. Maybe I missed it, or

maybe there's a good reason, but services is not specifically defined in the act.

Ian Burge Manager: That's correct. Services are covered under Section 13 of Treasury Board Policy and Procedures Manual.

Mr. Trivers: Oh.

Ian Burge Manager: The present act is only a public purchasing act. This one is going to be a *Procurement of Goods Act*, goods only.

Mr. Trivers: So this is goods only.

Ian Burge Manager: Goods only.

Mr. Trivers: That's why it's called the goods act. All right, very good, thank you.

Chair: (c) "jurisdiction" means

(i) the Government of Canada,

(ii) the government of a province or territory of Canada, other than Prince Edward Island,

(iii) the government of a country other than Canada or of a state or territory of that country, or

(iv) a department or agency of a government referred to in subclause (i), (ii) or (iii);

(d) "Minister" means the Minister of Finance and includes a person designated by the Minister to act on his or her behalf for the purposes of this Act and the regulations;

(e) "Schedule A entity" means

(i) a department of the Government of Prince Edward Island, established in accordance with the *Public Departments Act* R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. P-29, and

(ii) an entity prescribed as a Schedule A entity;

(f) "Schedule B entity" means an entity prescribed as a Schedule B entity.

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was just wondering if you can give an example of a Schedule A entity and a Schedule B entity. I don't have those schedules in front of me.

Ian Burge Manager: Okay. Presently, right now, the *Public Purchasing Act* just calls them departments and then other funded bodies from the operating fund.

Mr. Trivers: Right.

Ian Burge Manager: What we want to do is clarify it now to develop a Schedule A entity and a Schedule B entity. Schedule A entities will all be departments; Department of Finance; Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Ian Burge Manager: Schedule B entity would be a Crown corporation or an agency: PEILCC, Health PEI, that sort of thing.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, thank you. That's perfect.

Chair: All right. Continuing on.

(2) In this Act and the regulations, with respect to a Schedule A entity or Schedule B entity that is not a legal person, an action stated to be taken by, or a duty imposed on, the entity is understood to be an action taken by, or duty imposed on, the head of the entity or a person who has been designated by the head of the entity to be responsible for the procurement of goods for the entity.

Mr. Trivers: Question, Chair (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes. I was wondering: The procurement area in the department of health specifically, would they be a Schedule A or a Schedule B entity?

Ian Burge Manager: Schedule B.

Mr. Roach: Schedule B.

Mr. Trivers: As a Schedule B entity, who is the head of the entity or person responsible for that particular health procurement?

Mr. Roach: The CEO.

Mr. Trivers: CEO. Thank you.

Chair: Shall it carry?

Mr. Trivers: No. Clause by clause, please.

Chair: No, no. That section.

Mr. Trivers: That section?

Chair: Carry that section.

Mr. Trivers: Section 1 carried.

Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Biggar: Carried.

Chair: So carry section 1? Carried.

Thank you.

Administration

2. (1) The Minister is responsible for the administration of this Act and the regulations.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this Act or the regulations, the Minister may designate one or more persons to act on the Minister's behalf for the purposes of this Act and the regulations.

3. The Minister shall procure goods under this Act using the procurement methods, and in accordance with the procurement rules, set out in the regulations.

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

There are a number of places where this replacement act refers to regulations. That's in relation to administration, Schedule A entities, Schedule B entities. As we have heard often, the devil is in the details.

I looked up the existing *Public Purchasing Act* regulations and, indeed, they are very specific and very important regulations, and it's where a lot of the important details are. It's worrisome to me that the regulations are separate from the act because I think, looking at the existing regulations, they really shouldn't be items that change very often in my opinion, and that's one of the arguments for having regulations. You need to change them quickly as opposed to going through this process.

I wanted to get your comments as to why you wouldn't put at least the vast majority of what is now in regulations into the act itself.

Ian Burge Manager: Just simply for operational process. Some of the operational processes in the existing act were sometimes more cumbersome to change if you wanted, so we wanted to move them to regulations. The regulations for this act will be very supportive of what's required in here to clarify the process for procurement, to clarify the entities and who is responsible for doing what and that sort of thing.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Right, and I mean, that's the standard answer given for why you would put things in regulations versus an act. But I'm looking at some of the clauses in the existing act like reinstatement to vendors' list, for example, 5.1 of the existing regulations: following removal of a vendors' name from the vendors' list, the vendor may be reinstated by providing sufficient evidence to the division that causes leading to removal having been rectified.

To me, that is not something that I would ever see operationally having to be changed on a regular basis, and I guess that's my point. If we go looking through the current regulations most of them, the vast majority of them, seem to be things that I think should be included in the legislation because operationally, and maybe I'm wrong on this, they don't seem to be things that would need to be changed rapidly or changed very often at all.

Ian Burge Manager: A good example of the disqualification or reinstatement – the old list, the old act and regulations refers to the vendors' list. That's one of the reasons we're trying to update is we don't use a vendors' list anymore with the present tendering system. What we're trying to do is now there will be a very clear process in how to disqualify, if required, and how to reinstate a vendor. But they will be in the regulations.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to state my concerns that with so many of these details in the regulations and with the ability to change them quickly and without going through debate in the Legislature, that we may be open to making changes that potentially could not be in the best interest of Islanders, that I think should require debate in this House.

Anyhow, that's my opinion. I just wanted to state that for the record.

Thank you.

Chair: Moving on.

4. The Minister may enter into an agreement with a jurisdiction that provides for

(a) the Minister to procure goods for the Minister and the jurisdiction on a joint basis; or

(b) the jurisdiction to procure goods for the jurisdiction and the Minister on a joint basis.

5. The Minister may join a buying group if the Minister is satisfied that the procurement practices of the buying group conform to the spirit and intent of this Act and the regulations.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Schedule A Entities

6. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this Act or the regulations, a Schedule A entity shall obtain goods through the Minister.

(2) Subject to this Act and the regulations, the Minister shall procure goods requested by a Schedule A entity.

(3) Where a Schedule A entity is permitted under this Act or the regulations to procure goods for itself, the Schedule A entity shall procure those goods using the procurement methods, and in accordance with the procurement rules, set out in the regulations.

7. The Minister may disqualify a supplier from providing goods to Schedule A entities, in accordance with the regulations.

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to, again, express my concern, and with the regulations being held outside of the legislation, the ability for a minister to disqualify a supplier from providing goods really is outside of the scrutiny of the Legislative Assembly. That's all.

Chair: Shall Schedule A entities carry?
Carried.

Schedule B Entities

8. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this Act or the regulations, a Schedule B entity shall procure goods for itself.

(2) A Schedule B entity and the Minister may enter into an agreement that provides for

(a) the Minister to procure goods for the Schedule B entity or for the Schedule B entity and the Minister on a joint basis; or

(b) the Schedule B entity to procure goods for the Minister or for the Minister and the Schedule B entity on a joint basis.

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was just wondering: How do you make the decision about whether a Schedule B entity

should procure goods for itself or whether it should be in conjunction with the minister, for example, on a joint basis?

Mr. Roach: If it's over the threshold, the dollar threshold that we talked about earlier about goods. If it's under, they can do it themselves, if it's under the threshold. If it's over they have to go to the minister.

Mr. Trivers: So you're speaking specifically of that \$10,000 threshold?

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Mr. Trivers: I'm just wondering why you wouldn't specify that in the legislation. Because it just says: "the minister may enter into an agreement that provides for". It really doesn't say anything about a threshold there. It seems like it's a decision that's made between the entity and the minister and perhaps that's (Indistinct) –

Mr. Roach: But that's clearly laid out in the *Financial Administration Act*, those thresholds.

Mr. Trivers: All right. It's not clear to me in this act, anyhow, how that – and it doesn't refer to the *Financial Administration Act* here either. It's important stuff. Do you think that it should refer to the *Financial Administration Act* or maybe I missed that somewhere in this legislation that does.

Ian Burge Manager: What the intent is – the Schedule B entity may go out to tender on itself or it could do it through the government or through the minister.

Mr. Trivers: Right. Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I do understand that, but I'm just wondering how that decision is made. The legislation says that there's the option for that to happen, but it doesn't –

Mr. Roach: Anything over that has to come to Treasury Board –

Mr. Trivers: Okay.

Mr. Roach: – for a tender.

Mr. Trivers: All right. Again, I think it would be useful to reference the *Financial Administration Act* but perhaps that's not needed. I'll just put that on the record.

Chair: (3) A Schedule B entity may enter into an agreement with another Schedule B entity that provides for one of the Schedule B entities to procure goods for the other Schedule B entity or for both Schedule B entities on a joint basis.

(4) A Schedule B entity shall procure goods using the procurement methods, and in accordance with the procurement rules, set out in the regulations.

9. (1) On application by a Schedule B entity, in the form and manner required by the Minister, the Minister may give a Schedule B entity permission, in writing, to join a buying group if the Minister is satisfied that the procurement practices of the buying group conform to the spirit and intent of this Act and the regulations.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, more or less a question. I just wanted to, for the record, state that again in section 8(4) and in section 9(1) the regulations are referred to, and they are such a core important part of what's going on I would like to see them in the legislation.

Thank you.

Chair: (2) The Minister may, in writing, revoke permission given to a Schedule B entity to join a buying group if the Minister has reasonable grounds to believe that the procurement practices of the buying group fail to conform to the spirit and intent of this Act and the regulations.

10. A Schedule B entity may disqualify a supplier from providing goods to the Schedule B entity, in accordance with the regulations.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to state for the record, again, the fact that a schedule B entity – so this isn't even the minister. This is a Schedule B entity can disqualify a supplier from providing goods to the Schedule B entity in accordance with the regulations. The regulations are specified elsewhere and can be changed without Legislative Assembly scrutiny. That is worrisome to me. I just wanted to state that for the record.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Would the Assembly like to carry the whole bill, or continue?

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Chair: So we carry the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Roach: I move the title.

Chair: *Procurement of Goods Act*.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Roach: I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the 17th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 17, *An Act to Amend the Off-Highway Vehicle Act*, Bill No. 52, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the said bill be now read a second time.

Clerk: *Act to Amend the Off-Highway Vehicle Act*, Bill No. 52, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will now call on the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot to Chair the bill.

Chair (Palmer): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Off-Highway Vehicle Act*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Leader of the Opposition: Just give us an overview.

Ms. Biggar: Sure. Hon. members, I ask permission to bring a stranger on the floor.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Ms. Biggar: Who is, in fact, no stranger to this floor, Mr. Graham Miner from Highway Safety Division.

Mr. Roach: Highways and byways.

Ms. Biggar: You just want to identify yourself for the records.

Graham Miner Director: Graham Miner, director of PEI Highway Safety Division.

Ms. Biggar: Hon. members, this particular amendment to the *Off-Highway Vehicle Act* is in order to include our province's scenic roads under the regulation-making powers for the act.

When the powers were first set out in 1994 the category of scenic heritage roads did not exist, and that was created in 2005. This particular section will allow government to pass regulation to allow snowmobiles to legally use seasonal roads and now clarifies that the regulatory power extends to letting us make regulation dealing with closed scenic heritage roads as well. That's just to –

Leader of the Opposition: I guess the question to me, Chair: Is this limiting or reducing the amount of roads or access that snowmobiles have during their season?

Ms. Biggar: No, it's actually, I would say, increasing them legally.

Leader of the Opposition: Did we have any discussions with the snowmobile association?

Ms. Biggar: We have had a lot of discussion this past fall, yes. They're all okay with this. We meet with them regularly on a number of other things that they're doing, so we've had great discussion with this about this change.

Leader of the Opposition: Chair, pass the bill.

Mr. Trivers: I have a question there.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, minister, for bringing this amendment forward.

I know that there has been a lot of confusion in this area, at least in my District 18. Several of my constituents were very concerned about the travel of snowmobiles on heritage roads during the winter. I just

wanted to thank you for bringing forward this amendment to clarify once and for all what is allowed and what is not allowed when it comes to snowmobiles on heritage roads.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, member. This is a great way that we can encourage off-road vehicles like snowmobiles to stay off the road, I guess you would say. It enables them to connect with the Confederation Trail as well. Glad to bring it forward and I appreciate your impending support.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just wondering if I could ask the minister – there was a good booklet put out yesterday, I guess it was, with a combination of the Federation and the Snowmobile Association and the ATV group. There was some discussion before about a trail across the province which was unsuccessful for ATVers, but there was some discussion at one time about giving some Crown land to allow it for trails to be set up on Crown land, maybe a piece in each of the counties. Have you had any discussion on that or is that a possibility?

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, minister.

We don't actually have a lot of Crown land, but we have had ongoing discussions with the ATV clubs. We give them permission at various times to pass over Confederation Trail in that regard. But we have not had any discussion at length.

Obviously, if we're giving up Crown land we also have to consult with our First Nations in that regard. We haven't had those extensive discussions at this point.

Mr. McIsaac: You'd entertain a discussion with regards to that, though, in some of the areas, I mean, just a small area? It'd be good for the regular communities, the agriculture community, and for the ATV groups, too, if they had an opportunity to find an area where they could go and have their ride.

Ms. Biggar: I don't think you can pick out one area over the other, hon. Mr. Minister. I think we have to have an in-depth discussion. We're always having discussions with different groups.

I know that the ATV groups across PEI – I know in my area – they have already developed a lot of trails and they are doing great work. There are a number of issues that are of concern in regard to use of ATVs and I'm very well aware in regard to that, especially from the farming community perspective, but at this point in time we haven't had that particular in-depth discussion.

Mr. McIsaac: But you are open to discussion to help in that way?

Ms. Biggar: We're always open to discussion with all groups.

Mr. McIsaac: Super, great.

Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

As I said, thank you for clarifying this once and for all, but there are definitely at least two different points of view to using closed scenic heritage roads for snow vehicles.

As you know, the heritage roads are also used in the wintertime for activities like snowshoeing and cross-country skiing or skiing in general, perhaps even just hiking along those. I know that several of my constituents had expressed concern about the coexistence of those activities with snow vehicles. I was wondering what chances for consultation did people have to give their input from both sides of that argument.

Ms. Biggar: Hon. member, thank you for the question.

It is a public road, and I will defer to my colleague beside me, but it is a public road, so people are entitled to use public roads. But we wanted to make a clarification in regard to specifically snowmobiles. But we don't want to restrict the public.

Mr. Trivers: Right. My question is more about what opportunities to consult were the people that represent both sides of that argument given. That's all.

Ms. Biggar: Of course. I know Graham was involved in this and he certainly had lots of conversations, so I'll just let him explain the process that we went through.

Graham Miner Director: What we've done, and we've opened up, we've had numerous conversations for various individuals and groups.

The clarification part of it, too, is that the closed seasonal roads – the closed scenic heritage roads – even though they're closed, which means they're not maintained, the rules of the *Highway Traffic Act* and the *Off-Highway Vehicle Act* apply to those roads.

This is a clarification that will come out in regulation as it develops further will be to treat those roads as they fall specifically under the *Highway Traffic Act* and the rules of the *Off-Highway Vehicle Act* – that we'll engage those rules for, like, hikers just as if they're pedestrians on any other road.

What it does by the regulation authority, it allows the snowmobile to operate on the road, but it also then has to follow all the regulations under the *Highway Traffic Act*, meaning registration, insurance, driver license, give right of way to pedestrians, and all those rules that are already built into all the other safety rules for the use of other roads.

But in this particular case, then it allows the use of a snowmobile. Speed limits and all those types of amendments that exist in other regulations then flow into these sets of regulations. That's why the importance of that in the words "closed scenic heritage roads" because they fell underneath the seasonal roads was to clarify that they are inclusive as well.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, and that answer is very good. Thank you for that.

I wanted to understand, though, what consultation opportunities they had, and a second question maybe you could answer is whether you think that cross-country skiers, snowshoers, and hikers can safely coexist

with snow vehicles now that it will be treated in this manner, where it is a road (Indistinct) governed under the *Highway Traffic Act* along with the regulations and then the rules that snow vehicles will have to follow.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, hon. member.

I know that the snowmobile association are very vigilant in that their members abide by the regulations that are in place on PEI, whether it's on the trails or in regard to other particular regulations, and that they – as we would expect – also will be abiding by the laws that apply by using those particular road (Indistinct).

I think in any case we can coexist as a province in that regard.

Mr. Trivers: Just to clarify, do you think that closed scenic heritage roads can be used for both snowmobiling and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing at the same time?

Ms. Biggar: I think they can coexist. I can't predict if there will be a snowmobile and a snowshoer and a skier on the road at the same time, but I think we can coexist.

Mr. Trivers: Is that a scenario that will be allowed under this amendment?

Ms. Biggar: It does allow for it, and maybe Graham would like to further comment. Certainly, if not that's –

Graham Miner Director: It allows for that in that it evolves the conversation to – what we're doing is looking at what has been the status quo on PEI for many years where snowmobiles, hikers, snowshoers have been using these roads, and in some ways contrary to whatever rules and regulations are in play.

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Graham Miner Director: This is formalizing that process and then starting that public education process to say: All the rules of the road do apply to these, and here's what they are – speed limits, rights of pedestrians, travel snowshoers, and so on, and to work forward with that public education.

Mr. Aylward: The hour has been called, so can't carry the bill.

Mr. Trivers: No, I have more questions.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Trivers: Not the bill, bringing the Speaker back.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I may, I'd like to suggest that everyone clean their desk out since the youth parliament is going to be here this afternoon.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that this House adjourn until November 29th at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good weekend.

The Legislature adjourned until Tuesday, November 29th, at 2:00 p.m.