

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature sat at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker's Ruling

Speaker: Hon. members, yesterday the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque and the Opposition House Leader rose on a point of order respecting the matter of government announcements made outside of the House while the House is in session.

The member referenced the ruling I delivered on this same topic on the 20th of April 2016. At that time I advised all members that it has been customary that major initiatives or announcements by government are made in the Legislative Assembly as part of the public release of information when the House is sitting. This has been done out of respect for the Legislative Assembly and its members.

As I had previously ruled, and consistent with past Speakers, I remind all ministers to be mindful of this important tradition and ensure that all major government announcements or initiatives are made first to the Legislative Assembly when in session.

Thank you.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome to everyone in the gallery, folks watching from home, and especially those in District 9 York-Oyster Bed. A special acknowledgement to Mitchell Wood and Dan Larter, young supporters and people interested in the political process, and everyone else in the gallery.

Mention two events in the community to recognize: one, community activist, Al Douglas is famous for, among other things, his beard, and has started an initiative in support of the food bank called The Beard Gives Back. If he succeeds in raising \$5,000 for the food bank Al is going to shave his beard, so I hope he's successful in his fundraising and we look forward to seeing

him shaven. The second thing, I had an opportunity to see Team Canada play in sledge hockey world challenge Sunday night, and they're playing again tonight, the final game of the round-robin or the preliminary against Team United States. It's a great game and I want to of course wish Team Canada all success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I would like to welcome everybody in District 19 this morning, and welcome everybody in the gallery here, and I would also like to say hello to the media. I haven't done that this session, but I appreciate them being here with us and expressing what's happening to the public on what we do in here.

I would also like to recognize the actual minister of environment. I don't think his tie is as nice as mine, but I want to recognize that.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise and welcome all the folks in the public gallery, as well as all of the good people up in Alberton-Roseville that may be watching, as well as right across the entire province.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our minister responsible for highways. I had an opportunity to get home a little bit quicker last night back to the wonderful District of Alberton-Roseville because the Cascumpec Bridge is now open and –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Murphy: Although Charlottetown is nice, it's nice to get back home as quick as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

It is a pleasure to rise and welcome all of our great guests in the gallery today.

Of course, as was mentioned earlier by the Premier, my neighbour Mitchell Wood is in the House today, and it's good to see Mitch in. As well, Dan Larter, it's always a pleasure to have Dan back in the House. Eddie Lund is with us again.

But I'd also like to draw special attention to Barb Shea who's visiting in the House today, no doubt visiting her sister Joanne earlier in this building as well, but it's great to have Barb in the House today. Barb is a resident of Glenfinnan, the suburb of Fort Augustus. That's great, Barb, to have you in. I spent a lot of time watching her husband play a lot of hockey and ball in our community and a great athlete he was, so it's great to have you in the House today.

I had an opportunity this morning to spend some time and speak with a gentleman in my district, Murray MacKinnon, who's a resident at The Mount. Murray just moved in there a couple of months ago. I didn't even realize he was in there until I saw him today. Murray was a former boss of mine so we had a great chat about some old times, and it's always great to spend some time with former co-workers.

Also would like to make mention that last night my wife, Bonnie, and I ran into Dr. Tim Goddard and his lovely wife, Sally, at an event. I made a reference of the lovely tie he was wearing, I thought it was a very beautiful tie. You hear tell of people that'll give you the shirt off their back. Well, Tim Goddard will give you the tie off his neck, and he gave me the tie last night, and I wear it proudly in the House today. Yesterday it was in his possession, here it is on the floor of the Legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

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

It's my pleasure to rise today to welcome all the members in the gallery, and in particular Dan Larter. Dan grew up just around the corner from myself and was friends with my sister growing up, and was later involved in the organization of the Liberal executive in District 6 when I was over there, so welcome, Dan. Dan's actually putting his name in the hat for council in Stratford the next go around, so I expect Dan will have a long go in politics going forward. I thank him, too, for bringing a buddy with him today for the first time.

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 today as well, and I just want to draw attention to a very important event that's coming up this weekend. It's the 33rd annual Curl for Cancer. It's being held at the Charlottetown Curling Club. It's being organized once again this year by Lisa Jackson.

Lisa has been taking this on for many years now. The draw times run between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. They're six-end games. It's \$20 per person or \$80 per team, and my understanding is there are still a few spots available for a team. If you're interested, please contact Lisa and I hope you don't mind, Lisa, but I'm going to put your number out there. It's 316-0449, or you can visit the Charlottetown Curling Club website.

I'd also like to recognize Mr. Dan Larter and wish him all the best in the municipal by-election, whenever that shall be held. I know Dan's done a tremendous amount of work, particularly with the youth in Stratford, the skateboard park and various other activities in our community.

I also want to just acknowledge a very important event that I attended a couple of weeks ago at the Charlottetown Curling Club. It was Dan's father's 60th birthday party I was invited to. I was very happy to relay the fact to George that he might be turning 60, but if you equate that to the current conversion rate, he would only be 43.7 American.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to welcome everyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald, especially Shirley Dickieson. I know she likes to tune and watch, so hello, Shirley.

I wanted to welcome everyone to the gallery, especially Joanne Callaghan and her assistants. It's good to see you hear today.

I wanted to recognize the volunteer firefighters that do so much for our communities. I saw a post on Facebook and they were talking about Christmas trees. 'Tis the season the Christmas trees are going up, and they were saying that Christmas trees can use up to four litres of water a day, so make sure you water your Christmas trees. Otherwise they can get very dry and they are a dangerous fire hazard. I wanted to pass on that message from them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to welcome everyone back again today, especially those watching on EastLink.

I'd like to say hello to all my neighbours, but one neighbour in particular was Tim Carter I'd like to say hello to. Good afternoon to Tim. Tim and I had a great chat at the garage last night and we had a great

chat about politics and the great job that I'm doing.

I know yesterday morning I mentioned about the community –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct).

Mr. Aylward: (Indistinct) I was going to say.

Mr. R. Brown: Donald Trump's just as good as you.

Mr. LaVie: Yesterday morning I mentioned about the minister of communities, about getting back to me so quick with answers, just in one day he got back to me. I want to thank the minister of fisheries and agriculture, too. I sent him a written question yesterday and on my way home I got the answer.

I'd like to thank the Member from Morell-Mermaid for putting a question forward about the written questions. We weren't getting our answers on these written questions. Morell-Mermaid last week came up and hammered the government on not answering written questions, and I'm glad it's working. I'm getting my answers for the people up in District 1 and they appreciated that very much.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, rise today to welcome all those back in the gallery and my colleagues back to the Legislature, and a big hello to District 22 Summerside-St. Eleanors' residents who are viewing at home.

I just wanted to rise today and give credit and accolades to the Delta Prince Edward. I was at a luncheon to over 400 seniors that the Delta Prince Edward and their team down there put on free-of-charge for seniors each and every year to help kick off the holiday season. They even provided the parking. I didn't even have to park in the underground garage. Parking was free.

They had a lunch for them, they had entertainment, and they also had bingo, which is the highlight of the day.

Thank you to the Delta Prince Edward and their team for doing this out of the goodness of their hearts. I know that the seniors there were very appreciative.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everybody here again, today, too. I'd also like to agree with Timmy Carter and the good job that the Member from Souris-Elmira is doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEwen: I'd like to welcome Joanne Callaghan and Michelle here today, as well as say welcome to Barb Shea who's with us today. They're a wonderful family from District 7. We very much appreciate you guys being here today.

Everybody's out Christmas shopping now, I please encourage to do as much local shopping as you can. My good friend, John Morris, told me that he has put on his website, it's funwithjohn.ca, a number of Island-made gifts that he has highlighted, too. That's another way you can find out to buy local.

I would like to thank the students and staff of Morell Consolidated last night. A wonderful Christmas concert, as I know there are many going on right now. I would especially like to thank the music director and teacher, Nikki Waite and her husband Andrew Waite, for helping out. It was spectacular, a job well done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Fire Department Dinners

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I had the honour of attending two fire departments' Christmas dinners over the past weekend. I take great pride in being asked to attend each year to congratulate the firefighters of my District of Evangeline-Miscouche. It gives me a chance to acknowledge all the firefighters, not just those who receive accolades and acknowledgement from their peers, but each and every one of the firefighters. On behalf of everyone these heroic firefighters serve, I would like to extend a big thank you for all they do.

I would like to congratulate Desmond Arsenault of the Wellington Fire Department for being named firefighter of the year. They handed out awards for level 1, and level 1 plaques, and recognition of service pins to those who had reached milestone years within the department. I commend Dennis Cormier for his 30 years of service with the Wellington Fire Department.

In Miscouche, Travis Gaudet and Doug Trowsdale were both given the honour of firefighter of the year. This group has acknowledged a young group called junior firefighters this year and they named Kenny Gillis for their choice for that award. Also, John Mitchell with the Miscouche Fire Department received his 20-year-pin for dedicated service.

I would like to personally thank all those firefighters in Wellington and Miscouche, and across this province, for allowing me to honour and share in this special night.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Summerside Christmas Appeal

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Christmastime is a time of giving, and in that spirit I would like to recognize the good work that is done in my community by the annual Summerside Christmas Appeal. I would also like to encourage people to donate so that the joy of Christmas can be felt by someone who may be less fortunate.

The televised appeal was Monday evening, but I know donations can be made at any time.

The annual Christmas Appeal is now in its 67th year. Eric Ferrish has been helping out for over 40 of those years. Eric has said: The effort is always worth the reward and the smiles on the children's faces, and even the seniors', is what it's all about.

Sue Gallant has also been a dedicated volunteer for years and is one of the key folks in the annual appeal.

The Kin family of Summerside prepared over 200 Christmas boxes last year that were delivered to families and seniors in the area. They coordinate with the other local organizations to get a confidential list of families that may need a little extra help to provide Christmas joy in their home.

These lists provide information on the age and sex of children in the home so that suitable gifts are provided. The boxes also contain enough items for Christmas dinner and several meals. Members of the Kin family then personally deliver each box.

As we move into the Christmas season, may we all consider those who may not be afforded the same comforts as ourselves, and I encourage everyone to share with those who might be financially disadvantaged during the holidays.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Buns and Things Bakery

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

A pleasure for me to rise today and speak about the famous Buns and Things Bakery, and that it now has new ownership, but still has the same quality and customer-driven approach they have always had.

Rob DeBlois will be passing that torch onto his son Bill on January 1st, keeping the bakery in the family for 30 years and

counting. Rob knew that the business would need a lot of work and effort to make a go of it and he faced bankruptcy just after two years, but he was determined to make a go of it. Like any small business you have to put your heart and soul into it and Rob and his wife Elaine did just that.

For many years he started his days at 4:00 a.m. serving as owner, operator, and head baker. Rob changed the name to the now commonly known Buns and Things Bakery. I'm sure we all have heard their famous radio commercials. They are quite hard to forget.

As Rob put it: It took me 18 years to turn the business into an overnight success. They sell between 400 to 500 loaves of bread each day with most of their business, some 80% of it, coming from walk-ins. Some customers make a daily appearance.

With three and a half tons of flour used per week, there's no question Rob's son Bill will continue to succeed with the family business.

As Bill said recently to the *Guardian*: There was a sentimental pull to carry on a family business that put the food on his plate while growing up in Stratford and helped pay for university education.

Bill left his job in Ontario to come home and get ready to run the family business, something he is looking forward to. Meanwhile, Rob and his wife Elaine credit a huge part of their success to the more than 30 dedicated staff who have tremendous pride in their work every day.

Bill is ready to get working and getting his hands dirty. He has big shoes to fill, but I'm sure he will have no issues stepping up to the challenge.

I want to take the opportunity to congratulate Rob and Elaine on their 30 years of running a successful business, and I want to wish Bill all the success in the future.

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.

Federal funding for seniors' health care

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

On Friday the Premier will be travelling to Ottawa with other premiers to discuss health care funding with the prime minister. We have unique health challenges here in PEI due to our size and scale compared to other provinces. Our seniors make up a large percentage of our population.

Question to the Premier: What extra funding for seniors' health care services for Prince Edward Island will you be asking for?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question, it's very much on our minds.

We go through to the First Ministers' meeting which will start tomorrow evening. The premiers have been advocating, going back several meetings of the Council of the Federation, to have this matter brought to the First Ministers' table. We're pleased that the prime minister has now agreed that on Friday evening over dinner there'll be two hours devoted to this subject.

The question of an aging population (Indistinct) the most acute part of our medical care needs, as well as right through to home care and community care, is very much part of the province's advocacy as we look forward to speaking with the federal government and our provincial territorial partners about this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Federal funding for mental health and addictions

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

I never heard anything in there that actually says what you're going to be asking for, Premier. The federal government has put extra money on the table targeted for home care, and mental health and addictions. These are two very important areas of need to Islanders where money is required.

Question to the Premier: Are you prepared to accept new federal health care funding for mental health and addictions even if there are strings attached?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our first concern is really for the quantum of the funds. When we look at our total spending on health now, upwards of \$650 million, closer to \$670 million, and where the pressures are and where we're seeing them in the current year, it's quite evident that there are pressures both with respect to the changing demographics or the advancing age of our population and in the growing incidence of mental health issues.

Those are both issues of prime concern to the province. The amount of money that to date has been offered by the federal government would be, in our view, insufficient when it is spread across the country so we're looking first for more money.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Manor replacement and infrastructure funding

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

I think there are extreme pressures on our seniors and I think we're hearing of that. We see in the Capital Budget why the federal government might want strings attached. Manors in Tyne Valley and Montague getting bumped for the Cornwall bypass. A replacement for the Hillsborough Hospital is not even on the horizon. When the time came again to delay the manor replacements in Tyne Valley and Montague, your

government's excuse was that the federal cost-sharing was being exploited for other projects.

Questions for the Premier: Will you be insisting that the prime minister add manor replacements to the infrastructure funding available to the province?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, on the question of infrastructure, notably as regards the manors, this has been an active part of our conversation with the federal government going back some time, and it's as we look to refine and be precise about what is covered by references to social infrastructure.

Let me go back on the point about the health care funding, to give a more complete answer on that – or to pursue it in the amount of time that's available in QP. The federal government, under the plan that was put in place by the previous government, would see the funding reduced from 6% to 3% increase effective in March 2017. Our very clear objective is on that aspect, to indicate together as provinces and territories that that 3% increase is insufficient.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

That was the excuse your government gave to delaying the manor replacements. Of course Islanders know that the real reason was the Cornwall bypass which took money. But waiting for federal cost-sharing was the excuse. Getting the prime minister to validate your excuse I think should be a big priority.

Question to the Premier: Why should people in Montague and Tyne Valley believe your excuses on more manor delays if you won't raise the issue with the prime minister?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the prime minister and the federal government

are well aware of our view on the manors and on social infrastructure.

Let me say that the reason why we are pursuing this is in the interest of the provincial taxpayer. If we can have a cost sharing on these important facilities, then it's very much in the interest of Islanders from tip to tip, and I should think people on all sides of this House, that we pursue that federal funding.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Child care funds

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Child care is expensive and it's often a barrier to good economic participation, especially for young single parents.

Question to Minister of Family and Human Services: Has the minister restored the \$700,000 that's been cut from your budget over the last few years?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The child care subsidy program that my department administers is a very valuable support program to low- to moderate-income Islanders all across Prince Edward Island, and currently the program is under review. We have a dedicated staff member looking at the program and we're hoping to have some more information to bring back to the House within the next couple of months.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The \$700,000 that was cut from your budget for child care subsidy and the \$300,000 that this government planned and promised during the last election, and has not delivered on, would go a long way for Island

families to provide good quality child care for their children this winter.

Mr. LaVie: And for Christmas, they need a Christmas. Every child needs a Christmas.

Ms. Compton: Why are you doing the opposite of what you promised during the last election campaign?

Mr. LaVie: Every child deserves a Christmas.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to our campaign or our platform promise which would be to increase the child care subsidy.

However, as it was determined by the opposition or agreed by the opposition last year, it wasn't just the budget line that needed to be adjusted, the whole program needed to be looked at. We are taking a comprehensive look at the whole program and increasing if necessary, and reduce or adjusting thresholds if necessary.

But the whole program is being looked at because we are committed to giving the best service to Islanders that need it most when they need it most, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Caring for children –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)!

Ms. Compton: – is really important and does matter, but we –

Speaker: Hon. member –

Ms. Compton: I'm going to shift gears a little bit.

Child protection legislation review

For a few months now your department has been working on the review of the *Child Protection Act*. The protection act, it's very important legislation. This review should be

a big priority for your department. The consultations on this review wrapped up in late summer. It's now December and the review hasn't been released. What's causing the delay?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the minister responsible for child protection on Prince Edward Island, I take this file very seriously. Protecting a child's best interest is everyone's responsibility. It's government's responsibility, it's a community's responsibility, and it is individuals' responsibility.

The consultation process took place over 34 – we had 34 consultations across all municipalities over the fall of last year or the spring of last year, and a great deal of information did come out of those consultations. We heard from frontline workers. We heard from families. We heard from children that have been in the system.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct).

Ms. Mundy: All of that information has been compiled, it will be released –

An Hon. Member: Time!

An Hon. Member: Answer!

Ms. Mundy: – in the report hopefully sometime in the New Year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, I am watching my watch and I realize – but I'll control it from here, members, okay?

An Hon. Member: He's in charge.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Myers: My clock said 52 seconds (Indistinct).

Child protection legislation review and child advocate

Ms. Compton: It's our understanding that the idea of a child advocate was a hot topic during the discussion. Is that why the release of the *Child Protection Act* review is being delayed? Because the reporting that frontline workers gave to you, who also want a child advocate, that decision would displease the Premier? Is that why you're delaying this?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This government is committed to continuing how to learn, how to keep children safe, safe from parental harm on Prince Edward Island. We had rich, fulsome discussions with our population, with communities, as I said, from one tip to the other. We received a great deal of information and I am looking forward as minister to be able to bring those recommendations to the House as soon as they are ready, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Home reno program spending

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Child care is very important, the *Child Protection Act* is very important, but it's also very important that children have a nice, warm, safe roof over their head. One point one million dollars was budgeted for home reno program last year. We FOIPPed that request from our office and it revealed that \$833,000 was spent, a shortfall of a quarter of a million dollars.

Why did your department under spend the budget for home reno program by \$267,000 when the need and the demand is so high?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Is the hon. member referring to this current fiscal year?

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

Ms. Compton: The year before this budget that we're in now. Not the budget year we're in now, the one before, \$1.1 million.

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will take that under advisement and get back to you with an answer.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In April this minister stood up and told the House that the budget for the home reno program this year was going to be \$1.35 million. A FOIPP request from our office shows that, to date, less than \$47,000 of that budget has been spent, a shortfall of \$1.3 million.

Why is your department under-spending the budget for home reno programs again this year when the need and demand is so high?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are very aware of how important housing is on Prince Edward Island. I think yesterday or the day before I went through all of the programs that we have for housing on Prince Edward Island.

As for the PEI home repair program, we are still receiving quotes from many of our clients and we're working very closely with the people that did put in requests. The money has not been spent because the work has not yet been performed. But we are committed to spending the money in the budget for home repair programs for those Islanders that need it most to help them stay in their homes, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The data that our office reviewed showed that 97 files were open and approved with no money flowing. Perhaps they should talk to the Premier who seems to have an inside track on getting cheques cut immediately.

Have you been told to turn off the taps on home reno programs to pad the budget, just like the last two ministers of your department?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On the contrary, we have only increased the budgets to our home renovation programs. For instance, on our rent supplements we created 75 new rent supplements through investments in affordable housing agreement. That's 257 clients that will receive rent supplements.

Our PEI home repair program, we went from initially 75 to about 240 that we are helping, so that's additional. This year, \$250,000 invested into that program. Seniors Safe @ Home Program, again, an increase by \$125,000 to the budget line, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, minister.

Ms. Mundy: Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Specialist and physician complement

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As of late there's been a fair amount of media coverage over the past couple of weeks about medical professionals leaving PEI. In fact, I spent last night and this morning going through the long list of specialist vacancies in this province, and frankly it's quite disturbing.

Question to the minister of health: Minister, why are you failing to ensure that your government meets its full complement of specialists and physicians for Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note that the member opposite is talking about a long list.

The long list of specialist vacancies is about nine. I'm sure, once again, I think as a department and as minister, we'd like to see that to zero, and we continue to work very hard on recruiting and retaining the specialists here to provide good quality health care services to Islanders, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This minister's math is about as good as the finance minister's. I look at the list and it's much longer than nine.

This list includes the need for two anesthesiologists, two gastroenterologists, a hospitalist, medical oncologist or hematologist, and a obstetric/gynecologist, just to name a few.

Again to the minister. This is unacceptable. Please explain to this House why you were failing to recruit specialists to our province.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, once again, I'm not sure where the hon. member is getting that list.

I'm assuming it may be an old list, because I know for sure we have a full complement of OBGYNs here in this province.

But yes, we do have nine vacancies that we are trying to recruit for, and obviously in the news lately there was an issue about a gastroenterologist. That's a vacancy. We do have a couple of oncologist positions that will be coming up vacant. We have one currently right now that we're trying to fill for. We do have people that are already signed up, as in the oncologist situation, that will be coming in the summer of 2017, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Where I got this list from is actually Health PEI's website, so I have to, I guess, question whether or not your website's up to speed because certainly the minister's not.

Again, the physician list also includes the need for three psychiatrists. We're supposed to have a complement of 15. We currently are short three. A radiologist, an emergency medicine physician, and a physician consultant for addictions services.

Again to the minister: Why are so many medical professionals leaving PEI under your government?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I will say that the hon. member did have one accurate fact in his statements there, that we do have a complement of 15 positions that are dealing with our mental health and psychiatry division.

But I might add also, one of those positions is on maternity leave, so once again we don't fill a maternity leave situation. We are obliged to support our staff that have situations like that, and that person will be returning once their maternity leave is over. But we do have some vacancies in that section. We have currently 13.4 full-time equivalent positions working in psychiatry and mental health in this province, so with the one maternity leave, we really only have one position that we're trying to recruit for, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, this province also has a list of 33 vacancies for allied health professionals including two psychologists, a community mental health social worker, a psychologist, speech-language pathologist, (Indistinct) for provincial mental health and addictions, a social services worker, audiologist,

respiratory therapist, and occupational therapists. Again, the list goes on and on, and this is certainly a disgrace.

Again to the minister: What is your plan to address this phenomenal failure of your recruitment process, minister?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, once a position is posted it is open for competition for anyone who's interested in applying to those particular positions.

The hon. member is right. I do see – and it is of concern to see the amount of vacancies in some of the health profession situations that we have here in this province.

But I think the hon. member needs to focus on maybe some of the more positive attributes of what we're dealing about here. We tend to focus on the 10 vacancies that we don't have, but yet we should be focusing on the 250 physicians that we have practicing in this province, which is an all-time high of services that we are providing here from our medical professionals.

But I also note that we, once again, have more RCWs, more RNs, practice in this province than we've had in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again to the minister. Minister, I'm hearing from staff directly within your department that you were ordered by the Premier to cut \$25 million from your budget. Is that why you were forcing these medical professionals to leave PEI while failing to recruit specialists and physicians to serve Islanders?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I would sort of reiterate to the hon. member, actually the Department of Health and Wellness and Health PEI's budget was not cut, it was increased, in fact, increased about 3%.

We have significant increases in our budget. When it comes to hiring staff and compensating staff, once again, we want to respect our staff to the fullest by providing them the best remuneration possible.

But we are bound by Master Agreements that outline the remuneration that our professionals receive. Once again, we are in negotiations with a number of our organizations out there, the medical society being one. I'm quite confident that we'll come to a successful conclusion and continue to compensate our staff fairly, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

WCB concerns

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

On November 25th I asked the Premier about concerns with the Workers Compensation Board, to which he replied that I should present any concerns I may have to this House.

I have with me today a letter from John MacLean to the Premier, sent to premier@gov.pe.ca, and also forward to the Premier's office via MP Lawrence MacAulay's office. These are dated November 2015 and December 2015, so the Premier can hardly say that he has not been informed on issues with WCB.

Mr. MacLean also informed me that he attempted to take up the Premier's often-repeated open door policy to discuss his concerns. After several months staff in the Premier's office finally told John that there would be no meeting.

Question to the Premier: Why did you refuse to meet with a concerned Islander about problems in one of your portfolios?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, it's essential to the workers compensation regime and to the autonomy of the Workers Compensation Board as an arm's length agency of government, that they operate with a CEO, with a board, with officials.

While I am the minister reporting to the House on the work of the Workers Compensation Board, it would be not in order for me to start meeting with individual clients who are approaching me about concerns they have about their claims.

It has to do with the autonomy of the Workers Compensation Board, Mr. Speaker.

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

Meetings with Premier

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

Mr. MacLean is not the only one who has found the Premier's door to be closed rather than open.

I have also heard from the National Farmers Union, from the Coalition for the Protection of PEI Water, and many others, that they were also unable to get meetings with the Premier despite repeated requests.

Question to the Premier: To whom is your door open?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, it's my practice, when people approach the Premier's Office, that they're approaching government and where they need to speak to the people that can help them the most.

Indeed, we do get approaches from people who have concerns about workers compensation, and it's our practice to ensure that they are in touch with the Workers Compensation Board. In the case of the National Farmers Union, their leadership has met directly with the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, with the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, and we may well have a further meeting with the three of us with them.

I think it has to be very clear and I think the House should appreciate, and I think the House would mind, if the Premier started meeting with everybody and doing the work of the whole of government because it doesn't work that way, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Meeting re: electoral reform

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

Another issue in which we've seen a similar pattern emerge, of course, is electoral reform.

Given the Premier's not-so-open door policy and the fact that government seems to have abandoned its motion for the not-so-binding referendum, will the Premier commit to either completing the debate on Motion No. 80 before we adjourn for the holidays in this House or making himself available to meet the leaders of the proportional representation campaign team to find a common solution to electoral reform?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I'm under the understanding that that matter is still before the House, and the House has got a ways to go, so I'm sure that we'll have an opportunity, among the 27 of us here in the House, to see what is the best way forward.

But as far as an open door on that one, we've made it very clear that there'll be a referendum with MMP on the ballot and that we recognize the importance of the plebiscite.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Wait time for long-term care beds in West Prince

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've been contacted by several families in my area regarding the long wait times for long-term care beds.

My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Minister, are you aware of these long wait times and do you have a number of how many individuals are awaiting long-term care beds in the West Prince area?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, we are aware that we have wait times in this province when it comes to people, who are assessed requiring long-term care needs. We have actually 1,141 long-term care beds that are designated in this province, and it just depends on where the situation is where an individual is willing to go.

Currently, the answer to that question to the hon. member is there are 20 people awaiting long-term care in the West Prince area, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, first supplementary.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, thank you for that.

What is your department doing to try to relieve some of that waiting time for these residents of the West Prince area?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that the wait times are a little longer than people would like.

I would also emphasize that wait times are based on the most urgent. Sometimes people can be on a list for some time where somebody is a more urgent case, then they may have to come off the list fairly quickly and be accommodated.

Our department is currently undergoing a review of a continuum of care for long-term care in this province. We're trying to get a better sense of where beds should be designated, how many beds should be in the system, how do we assess individuals that are assigned long-term care, so we can provide better services. In the meantime we are doing many things in acute care to try to accommodate people while they're waiting.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, second supplementary.

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, minister.

You know the Tignish seniors' co-op, I'm sure you are familiar with it. It is the Cadillac of community care facilities on PEI. They asked me if you would be willing to sit down with them and discuss the possibility of, perhaps, an expansion onto the facility that they have to include long-term care beds. Perhaps part of your review that designated beds may come to the Tignish centre.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can inform the House that I've had the opportunity since becoming minister to have numerous meetings with organizations, businesses. I know the Member from Belfast-Murray River invited me down to her community care facility in her district. We've had a number of organizations that have inquired about the issue of long-term care and being assigned to community care facilities.

I would say that the Tignish co-op community care facility is the Cadillac version. It's a beautiful facility and the staff is very dedicated to provide really good patient care.

At the commencement of our review within long-term care we will certainly be making the decision whether there should be more beds assigned to that particular area or not in future, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Holland College Alberton designated funding

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question's for the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. It was a proud day for me when the Alberton Holland College campus first opened. At that time it was provided with designated funding to ensure

its long-term viability and it was given a chance to establish in the region.

That period has since expired, but the need for designated funding is still there in order to plan proper programs that will ensure this rural college is there to provide a post-secondary education to students in our area of the province that might not have that opportunity if it wasn't there.

Can the minister assure me that the designated funding will continue for Alberton Holland College campus?

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

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

That's a great question. I firmly believe if the member wasn't there to stand up for his community the facility would not have been put there. He's done an excellent job in making sure that Holland College's presence is in Prince County.

Since the facility has been built we have contributed over \$5.5 million to the facility, both from capital and operational funding. We will continue to support the Holland College up there because we believe they're doing a great job.

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

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The original designated funding was for a period of five years at a set amount of support.

Can the minister assure us up in West Prince that that will be the case again?

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

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

As you know, it has been in the throne speech that we are working with our two post-secondary institutions for a long-term funding formula in order to help those facilities become even greater. We are working with Holland College and UPEI in

that order to get a long-term funding formula.

I can guarantee you the number one thing, the facility in Alberton will not be closing. It is a great facility. It provides great educational opportunities for a lot of people. With that member in that seat, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the residents in that area it'll not be closing.

Thank you.

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

Deleted government email accounts (further)

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week the Premier seemed to suggest that he didn't know the names of the two senior bureaucrats whose emails were deleted, as identified in the Auditor General's report.

Question to the Premier: Can you confirm today what you told us last week, that you don't, in fact, know the individuals' names that were involved?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We can go back to when this government was first elected. One of the very first things that took place was this government asked the Auditor General to go out and look into a particular matter.

The Auditor General has completed her work and she's brought her report back. That report was to be brought back to the Public Accounts. I respect very much the Public Accounts process and I respect very much the work that the Auditor General has done.

All of those details are certainly ones that the Auditor General will have and will report to the Public Accounts Committee.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That wasn't even an answer at all, it was 40 seconds of just air, filling time. This isn't the wharf in Souris where you're dragging Alan Campbell off to jail, this is serious, this is Question Period. I asked the Premier if he will confirm that what he told us last week was true.

Is it true, Premier, that you don't know whose emails were deleted?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

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

One of the things I'd like to point out is that when the Auditor General and her staff did their work they took approximately – they went through over 10,000 documents. The Auditor General herself interviewed all the principals that were involved in this file. The Auditor General has a tremendous amount of information that, individually, we don't have that ourselves. The Auditor General was to bring that information back to the Public Accounts. Again, we respect that process very much.

I know that the opposition have had the opportunity at Public Accounts, and I'm sure they'll take that opportunity to pose those questions to the Auditor General.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It was the Auditor General who said the fact that the emails were deleted limited her scope. You should read the report.

Question to the Premier again. I feel like this Premier has a duty to end this obstruction, the obstruction in this House that he has put on this whole session, and the obstruction in Public Accounts. It's time to level with Islanders. Islanders are his employers. We found out yesterday that 18% of them have already left you.

Question to the Premier: Why do you feel justified skirting your duty to Islanders with your obstruction and your evasions?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Auditor General's report has come out. We've said all along since the outset that we were looking forward to that report. We said we were very confident in the way that the Auditor General would carry out that audit and the Auditor General has done that.

The Auditor General has made 15 recommendations in her report. Government has taken those very seriously. We've acted on all of those 15 recommendations already. The majority of them have already been completed. I think that we've shown that government has taken this extremely seriously, otherwise we could drag this on for a long time. But that has been acted upon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Either the Premier is petrified to answer these questions so Islanders know the truth or he's scared to death of me, and it's probably both.

The very fact is that this Premier knew egaming was the single biggest thing – when he stepped forward, when he put his name forward, this was already one of the biggest issues on Islanders minds. It was him who reluctantly sent this to the Auditor General. It was him who said: No, I'm going to deal with this right away before the election. It was him that said: There'd be no obstruction and no one will stand in your way.

Question to the Premier: What changed between then and now to cause you to clam up?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the Auditor General has gone out, she's gone through the various departments that were involved. She's

interviewed each and every one of the principals that were involved. There were no obstructions. She got total work, she was able to work well with everyone that was there, and everything that she asked for she got.

The process was to bring that back to Public Accounts and the Auditor General has. I'm sure the Auditor General would be more than willing to respond to any in-depth questions because there's nobody who knows more about this, Mr. Speaker, than the Auditor General.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I worked in IT since 1998 and there's a lot of things that don't pass the smell test here for me. Only a handful of people in all of government would have the ability to actually delete an email, and not one of them – not one of them – would do it unless they were instructed to do it by someone. Perhaps even sent an email telling them to do it.

Question to the Premier: Do those written instructions exist somewhere on paper or electronically? If so, will you table it?

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

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

Continuing on with the line of questions, my colleague the Minister of Finance has clearly indicated that as ministers of specific departments responsible we take the work of the Auditor General very seriously. One of the recommendations was to address record information management. We're currently evaluating and assessing all government departments in respect to how records are kept and managed. We're also sending a clear message to departments and senior officials that we're committed to supporting new policies and new procedures by hiring new staff, Mr. Speaker, to do the work.

Thank you.

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

Hacking of government servers

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Simply put, emails don't exist, they remain on a server. There are two possible outcomes here. Somebody instructed someone to delete the account off the computer, off a government server, which is a serious violation of the Criminal Code of Canada and a breach of security at the highest level or, two, the system was hacked, which is a serious problem that should be investigated immediately to make sure that the records of the public are safe.

Question to the Premier: Have the email servers of government been hacked in the past 10 years?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point to the specifics that were said by the hon. member. I think if there was any criminal matters that have taken place, if there were any laws that had been broken, I feel 100% confidence that the Auditor General would have drawn particular attention to that in her report and she would have made recommendations to any local authority.

The Auditor General did not do that and there were no recommendations or there were no observations on her part of any criminality that took place. I'd like to make that very clear to the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, final question.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier doesn't get up to answer of my questions here today. Long gone are the days of Robert Ghiz where he actually wanted to discuss the issues of the day. This Premier is well too scared even though he's sticking up for Robert Ghiz. Funny how it goes, eh?

If this Premier doesn't have the decency to answer questions in this House, this Premier doesn't have the decency to allow Islanders to find out happened, then history will judge this Premier as guilty as those who have committed the sin.

Deleted government email accounts (further)

Question to the Premier: Whose emails were deleted?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said earlier, the Auditor General is the person who conducted this audit.

Mr. Trivers: Cover up.

Mr. Roach: The Auditor General had the opportunity to review tens of thousands of documents. The Auditor General interviewed all of the principals. She personally interviewed all of the principals that were involved in this and the Auditor General has all that information.

We respect the fact that the Auditor General has brought that document back to Public Accounts and we respect the role that Public Accounts has. Clearly, the opportunity is at Public Accounts where those questions should be asked of the Auditor General.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

First Ministers' Meeting

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, on Thursday and Friday I will have the privilege to represent Prince Edward Islanders at a meeting of First Ministers in Ottawa focused on climate change and health care.

Our meeting will include leaders of National Indigenous Organizations and I will be joined, for a portion of the meeting, by Chiefs Matilda Ramjattan and Brian Francis.

I look forward to making advances on these issues that will be of benefit to Prince Edward Island and Islanders.

First Ministers will work this week to confirm a Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change to move to cleaner energy, reduce our emissions and build an innovative, prosperous economy as we do so.

The federal government has mandated that all provinces and territories pursue a pricing regime for carbon.

While as an Island we are acutely aware of the effects of climate change, we will take a rigorous approach to an intended framework agreement to ensure that it meets the interests of Islanders and recognizes our particular geography and economy.

As a province, we have been a leader in moving to cleaner and renewable energy and conservation. Our wind regime is the best in the country and second only to Denmark in the world in its significance for our electricity use.

We have seen innovations in the use of biomass, and our approach to waste reduction and use in energy is world class.

We have shown that we are able to have clean energy and a strong economy at the same time.

In confirming a Pan-Canadian framework, it is necessary that the federal government recognize the leadership our province has shown in these regards and that it is sensitive to the makeup of our economy, including our primary industries.

We must ensure that any pricing measures are backed by evidence that they will lead to mitigation of carbon emissions and that they are designed with a view to continued growth of our provincial economy.

We want to take carbon out of the environment while pursuing every opportunity to enhance economic prosperity and the well-being of Islanders.

We must be sensitive to the needs of lower-income Islanders and our agriculture and fishing sectors, and work with rigour with

the private sector to identify ways to grow a green economy.

Work is underway on our government's energy strategy and climate change mitigation policy and will result in an integrated approach to tackling climate change while creating economic growth.

In moving forward with any pricing mechanism, we will pursue a made-in-Prince Edward Island approach that best benefits Islanders.

While in Ottawa, first ministers also will have an important discussion about health care funding in our country. Canadians and Islanders consistently indicate that health care is their number one priority. The Health Accord, and the federal-provincial-territorial collaboration that it guides, is essential to tackling issues that are the top of our collective concerns: better supports for an aging population; affordable prescription drugs; available home care; accessible care for mental health; and sustained funding for these and other areas.

PEI, like all provinces and territories, invests more funds in health care than any other area. As first ministers, it is critical that we work together to secure strong and consistent health care delivery here in Prince Edward Island, in the Atlantic region, and across Canada.

I look forward to reporting back to this Assembly and to Islanders on the First Ministers' meeting this week and to advancing the interests of Prince Edward Islanders and Canadians in these discussions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

I'm glad to hear that the Premier is travelling to Ottawa because there are many issues facing Islanders that are a great concern to me, and one thing I have been saying over the last year and three quarters

of being elected is how important climate change is to me and the environment. I do not think that this province is dealing with climate change in a way that it should be. I have stated that repeatedly over the time.

Health care is a big issue and I think that we can see this in the actual lack of frontline services that we are seeing in our hospitals. We're continually seeing deficiencies in our frontline, but we're never looking at the administration and the actual bureaucracy within the department. I think we need to shift the focus in looking at our frontline services and that's where our priorities should be, the same as in our education system, and I think this government is failing in that.

Carbon tax is a big concern to me. I think we need to look at the whole picture relating to a carbon tax and what we are doing to promote reforestation in the province and lessening greenhouse gases that are being emitted from this province, and I have stated that many times. I'm very interested in the framework or the Pan-Canadian agreement and I would be very willing to listen to what comes out of that when he comes back here in the House, possibly.

Low-income families are struggling in PEI. I think we never can forget that and I hope that this Premier, when he goes to Ottawa, that he puts that message forward to the other premiers and the prime minister, that we need to be looking after our low-income families, and especially our seniors, and we're not doing that to a level that I would say is acceptable.

Energy strategies are great to talk about, but what is the long-term goal of PEI and how does that tie into what we said that the province needs as an infrastructure summit? We need to be looking at our total infrastructure across the Island and tie that into energy strategy, and I think this government has failed to do that.

This meeting with the first premiers, I hope, Mr. Premier, that you do bring the concerns to Ottawa and you don't just sit there and not express what we need here in this province.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I think I speak for all Canadians when I say how delighted we are that we now have the opportunity for first ministers to get together and to meet with our prime minister, who obviously does have an open-door policy.

I was delighted to hear that the majority of the Premier's remarks centered on climate change before he even talked about health care. I hope that that, when the ministers meet in Ottawa, is the order of priority too.

That's not to say that health care transfers and getting a Pan-Canadian agreement is not important. Of course it is, and we need to protect and preserve access to health care services for all Islanders here on Prince Edward Island. But I think it's widely accepted that the greatest challenge of our time is in dealing with climate change.

This province, I mean, we don't carry a lot of political or economic heft to all premiers' conferences, but what we can do – there's a history of Prince Edward Island premiers providing inspiration for the rest of Canada in their words and in their actions. I hope that this Premier will take to Ottawa inspiration to work on climate change, and also following the motion last night that was unanimously approved, the concept of universal basic income and the federal partnership in that.

Also, finally, that the Premier will bring forward an inspiration to the prime minister of Canada that electoral reform is possible. Islanders voted for that. It's time for us to honour the vote and it's time for the prime minister of Canada to honour his promise that the last election would be the final one under first-past-the-post.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Ambulance Services

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Emergency care is a vital link in our provincial health care network.

Our Island paramedics are highly trained and skilled professionals who respond at a moment's notice when they are needed the most. I rise today to update the House on our ambulance system and its response times.

Recent investments in emergency health services have improved ambulance response times in every region of the province. These improvements include: the new Computer-Assisted Dispatch system, an additional ambulance for Kings County, and Rapid Response Units in the western and eastern regions, along with two transfer units.

In 2011 the average response time, and this is important, was 22 to 27 minutes for rural areas, and approximately nine minutes for our urban areas.

Today I am pleased to announce that the average ambulance response time for all of Prince Edward Island is eight minutes and 11 seconds.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Henderson: Our ambulances respond to more than 1,000 calls every month. As the demand and the volume rises, we will continue to make investments and change the face of how ground ambulances work in this province.

I also want to thank Island EMS which plays an integral role in the evolution of a modern provincial health care system.

We have also been expanding the role of paramedics on Prince Edward Island. One example of this is that in addition to responding to emergency care, our paramedics are also providing support for palliative care patients and their families who have chosen to receive palliative and end-of-life care at home. Since this initiative began there have been 275 palliative patients who have received after-hours pain and

symptom management from our specially trained paramedics.

We will continue to work closely with Island EMS to monitor and evaluate ambulance response times ensuring Islanders have consistent access to timely emergency care when and where they need it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

While I acknowledge the minister's statement with regard to improvements on response times by EMS, I have to say I am still hearing from our first responders, the volunteer fire members all across Prince Edward Island, that they are still, in most cases, the very first responders on site, whether it's to a home call or whether it's to a motor vehicle accident. These first responders are in many cases there on site for an extended period of time before Island EMS arrives.

Mr. LaVie: Playing with their fingers.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Aylward: Now, I will say that once the EMTs do arrive on site the level of care and their professionalism and their training that they have, is tremendous, second to none.

Mr. LaVie: Best in Canada.

Mr. Aylward: But to say that we have a response time of eight minutes and 11 seconds, I only have to go back to a case in Stratford back in June –

Mr. Henderson: That's average.

Mr. Aylward: – where the first responders responded to my home, they were there probably within five minutes, and it was 22 minutes before the EMTs arrived.

One of the serious issues I think that we have when we're talking about response

times is that when we have a contract with a private company, and they are permitted, within the contract, to eliminate the worst 10% of response times in their reporting mechanism –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Aylward: – then, unfortunately, those response times, those stats, are jaded.

While I do acknowledge the hard work and the dedication of these health care professionals on Prince Edward Island, I still call on this government to do the right thing and to report facts that are actually facts.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Of course ambulances represent a really important, critical part of the health care service on Prince Edward Island, ensuring that rural Islanders have access to on-time critical services. If we are to continue the pattern of having two main hospitals in this province and access for rural Islanders to those hospitals in a timely manner when emergencies require that, then I'm really pleased to hear that the ambulance service is actually providing the kinds of on-time acute care needs that it must do.

I also want to say a word about the first responders, the paramedics who do a fantastic job. I had a discussion the other day with a gentleman who works as a paramedic who is currently suffering from PTSD. I think it's important that we recognize that that is a real problem here on Prince Edward Island, and that these first responders need to be protected and they need to be serviced with the mental health care that they require. It's a difficult job and they are faced on a daily basis with things that would be horrific to any human being.

This is a great announcement and, again, providing on-time critical medical services to rural Islanders is of great concern.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Public Accounts

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I will have the honour of tabling the Public Accounts of the Province of Prince Edward Island for the fiscal year ended March 31st, 2016.

Volume I presents the audited consolidated financial statements. Volume II will present the financial statements of the operating fund and the details of revenues and expenses. Volume III will present the audited financial statements of the province's agencies, boards, and Crown corporations.

The province is responsible for maintaining a system of internal accounting and administrative controls in order to provide reasonable assurance that transactions are appropriately authorized, assets are safeguarded, and financial records are properly maintained.

The Public Accounts clearly point to a much stronger financial position by the province. This is the result of economic performance and sound financial management.

We will continue to work towards a balanced budget in the coming fiscal year.

We have already made significant progress in that direction. In the budget estimates for 2015-2016, we estimated a deficit of \$19.9 million. As the year progressed, we forecasted a deficit of \$27.7 million.

Today, I am pleased to report that –

Mr. R. Brown: Here it is, here it is. Hold on.

Mr. Roach: Today I am pleased to report that the actual deficit for the last fiscal year was \$13.1 million.

Mr. R. Brown: Great job. Cut it in half. Making PEI great.

Mr. LaVie: Nice to see you.

An Hon. Member: On the ropes now, got them on the ropes.

Mr. R. Brown: You got them on the ropes. Call the doctor.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker –

Speaker: Okay, members.

Hon. minister, continue.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, I'm really glad to see that they're so happy with it, because we all are very excited about this.

That is an improvement of \$6.8 million from the original budget.

The Public Accounts show progress in other areas.

Net debt as a percentage of GDP is declining. Our own resource revenue, the revenue we generate ourselves, is growing at a rate consistent with growth in our GDP. The increase in revenue last year was 1.9%. Program expenditures as a percentage of GDP have been steadily declining since 2012.

We are becoming more self-reliant as a province. The dependence of the province on federal revenues has also declined since 2012.

This government is committed to sound and responsible financial management. Our utmost priority is to be good stewards of taxpayers' dollars.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Hon. members, there's a member who wants to respond to the minister's statement.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: I'm pleased to rise and respond to the Public Accounts finally being tabled, finally.

Promised a balanced budget. Please try and keep your promises. That's what we ask from this side of the floor. Cheering for a \$13 million deficit? Shame.

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame.

Ms. Compton: We all know the Public Accounts is an annual financial summary, an accountability report for the Province of Prince Edward Island and for your government. Explain to us about the special warrants and where they fit into the \$13 million deficit. They're not in there, are they?

In the past years, both the opposition and the Auditor General, we've asked over and over again, we've raised concerns, about the inconsistent timing of providing us with Public Accounts. In 2014-2015, they were completed on September 30th and released October 7th. The year before Public Accounts were not released until February.

After being challenged for these delays, government promised to do better. We hear it over and over. We promise to do better.

A press release was issued last October and this government crowed about getting the blue books out so early, in October. Part of the issue with the Public Accounts release being so delayed so long is that this province's books are left open longer for a cleanup. That's what's happening, a cleanup.

I look forward to reviewing the blue books and seeing what was so important that the books needed another two months in the oven.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

The minister says proudly, you know, we're working, we're continuing to work towards a balanced budget. Now, we've heard that for the last ten years, of course. It's sort of like: Yeah, we're continuing down the path to electoral reform. Whether we'll ever get there or not is the question, isn't it?

The minister will stand there and proudly proclaim that tax revenues are up and spending is down as if Islanders should be excited about that. What he's really saying is we're paying more and we're getting less. That's what you're saying –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That we're paying more in taxes and we're getting less services for that.

I'm sorry, as an Islander I'm not prepared to stand here and get excited about that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the answer to written question 1,062 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Evangeline-Miscouche and the Government House Leader, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the list of vacant health positions that I referred to during Question Period which came directly from the website from Health PEI, including 21 physicians, 33 allied health professionals, and 43 nursing positions, and I move, seconded by

the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the answer to written question 1,061 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, by Command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the Public Accounts of the Province Prince Edward Island Volume I Consolidated Financial Statements, Volume II Operating Fund Financial Statements Detail of Revenues and Expenditures (Unaudited), and Volume III Financial Statements of Agencies, Boards and Crown Corporations for the period ending March 31st, 2016 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Celebrate Holiday Recipe Guide, which I would entice everyone to use, or pick up a copy of, it has great recipes in it from fisheries and agriculture and our wines from across the province with recipes inside and it's fresh off the press from our department, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Mr. Speaker, by Command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the report on borrowing pursuant to Section 46 of the *Financial Administration Act*, Credit Accommodation pursuant to Section 47, and report of loans pursuant to Section 30(1), 28 and 32(2) and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the written questions to the minister responsible for Communities, Land and Environment and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the documents that I referred to in Question Period today and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the written questions to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy – I'm having great luck with my written questions thanks to the Member from Morell-Mermaid so it's been going great for me and I hope the trend is not broken – and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Reports by Committees

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

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Communities, Land and Environment, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee and I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Casey: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Third Party, that the report of the Committee be adopted.

Your committee is reporting on its work since reporting to the Legislative Assembly in April of 2016.

Your committee met seven times this fall and held meetings on various topics relating to the committee's mandate including: emergency preparedness in the province; watershed groups; Engage PEI; municipality amalgamation and annexation; contaminated sites in the province; carbon pricing; and water bottling and exportation.

As a result of its deliberation your committee is pleased to recommend the following to the members of the Legislative Assembly.

- 1) That the Department of Communities, Land and Environment continue its suspension of any new developments for bottled water until the water act consultations are complete, and the new water act is passed by the Legislative Assembly.
- 2) That the Department of Justice and Public Safety engage stakeholders in updating the *Emergency Measures Act*.
- 3) That the Department of Justice and Public Safety engage with smaller municipalities to promote the creation of regional planning models.
- 4) That Engage PEI continue its outreach to encourage as many Islanders as possible to participate in the recruitment process for the various vacancies on agencies, boards, and commissions in the province with the goal

of attracting Islanders with a variety of experiences.

5) That the Department of Communities, Land and Environment consider re-implementing the free nitrate testing clinics.

6) That the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy partner with local watershed groups to identify and prioritize areas of maintenance of highways, culverts and pass ways over water, in order to protect sensitive nature of Island rivers and streams.

7) That the Department of Communities, Land and Environment considering waiving the fee on trees planted by watershed groups in the province.

8) That the Department of Communities, Land and Environment conduct water-budget analysis.

9) That the Department of Communities, Land and Environment create a contaminated sites online registry – in an open-data format – that would allow the public to access information related to contaminated sites in a user-friendly format.

10) That the Department of Communities, Land and Environment continue to consult with the Prince Edward Island Federation of Agriculture regarding their concerns relating to the newly introduced *Municipal Government Act*.

11) That the Department of Communities, Land and Environment continue to find ways to consult with Islanders who reside in unincorporated areas that may be included in future annexation.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Communities, Land and Environment, I would to thank the individuals and organizations that met with us to provide information, advice, and advocacy in matters of importance relating to communities, land, and environment on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the Chair and the rest of the committee. I think that the committee did some good work here and made some excellent recommendations.

One thing I'm looking forward to doing is meeting in the wintertime more than we did last year, and meeting throughout the summer, which we basically did not do last year. I would like to see the committee meet more often and I'm looking forward to that.

I'm also looking forward to the Minister of Communities, Land and Environment making some good progress on our recommendations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from West Royalty-Springvale, that the report of the Committee be adopted.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Murphy: This report is an account of activities since last reporting to the Assembly. The report includes seven recommendations, which I will go through here.

1) Your committee encourages lobster fishers to come together for the purpose of live lobster storage projects and encourages Innovation PEI and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to assist in increasing capacity in this area.

2) Your committee urges municipal, provincial and federal governments to work with the PEI Shellfish Association to help

address the economic and environmental challenges facing PEI's public wild shellfish industry.

- 3) Your committee requests that Fisheries and Oceans Canada reconsider the planned increases in minimum lobster carapace size in Lobster Fishing Area 25.
- 4) Your committee encourages Fisheries and Oceans Canada to comprehensively examine the Atlantic halibut fishery, weigh input from all eight fishing regions involved in it, and develop a new means of allocating quota that is based on sustainability of the resource; fair access for all these regions; the present level of economic dependence each region places on this fishery; and the potential economic benefit for each region in the event that its quota were to increase.
- 5) Your committee calls on all off-road vehicle users to show more respect for farmers and other land owners who do not wish their land to be trespassed upon; in the absence of such respect, greater restrictions on the use of off-road vehicles may be necessary.
- 6) Your committee encourages government to consider programs, incentives or other means of encouraging and assisting new entrants to the beef industry.
- 7) Your committee encourages government to continue supporting diversification in agriculture, including organic farming and other practices that promote soil health and long-term sustainability for the industry.

Your committee thanks the individuals and groups that shared their views on agriculture and fisheries with the committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Does the seconder want to speak to the committee report?

The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

Mr. Dumville: The committee did a lot of really good work and I appreciate our Chair. He took over and did a wonderful job on the committee, and all those members of the

committee were generally interested in what the report implies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's always nice to get up and speak to our two biggest industries here on PEI. First of all, I want to thank the staff. The staff did a great job. I do want to thank the Chair, because when we get to the table behind closed doors – there were a lot of hot issues at the table and a lot of heat went back and forth at these meetings. We had great discussions, whether it be good or bad, but we put everything on the table and we worked everything off the table.

I want to thank the committee itself for being patient at these meetings because these meetings are not easy. We're talking about people's lives across Prince Edward Island. These are big issues and it's great that we can have that kind of discussion at these meetings. That's what our committee meetings are for is to bring presenters in. We listened to these presenters and we took these presenters' messages behind the doors. We know we will because the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries takes his job very serious and we, as a committee, understand that.

He grew up in PEI, he knows what it's like, he knows what our industries are like, and going through these difficult times. It's us as a committee that got to bring these recommendations forward and make sure that these recommendations are put to the minister properly.

We will continue. I hope that I remain the critic for agriculture and fisheries because I've learned a lot in the last five years and I hope to continue to keep working with them.

To the committee, to the staff, to the Chair, I want to thank you for the past year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the committee report?

Shall it carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 25th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant: Order No. 25, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 56, in Committee.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, 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 call on the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot to come and Chair this 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 Employment Standards Act (No. 2)*.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Chair, would I have permission to invite a stranger to the floor, please?

Chair: Can you introduce yourself please, for the record?

Adam Peters Manager: Adam Peters, manager of Consumer, Labour and Financial Services.

Chair: Thank you.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Chair, when we adjourned there was a question on the floor in the form of a proposed amendment to 30(4)(a) to add the word “reasonable” to that clause.

I’ve gone back to the department which has, in turn, consulted with Legislative Counsel staff and they advise that this would not be an amendment that they would support. I can expand on what they said.

1. The current clause 30(4) is the same as what is proposed here, so it’s merely a copy of the existing clause.

The question which is raised of bringing the standard of reasonableness, what we may have here is bringing – what I would call – a criminal law standard into an administrative law context. Specifically what Legislative Counsel says is that the act itself sets minimum standards, including legislative standards, with respect to wages and benefits due to employees, and that those legislative standards have been passed and adopted by the Legislature. In effect, it’s the Legislature that determines what’s reasonable and in the public interest in setting those standards, and indeed, those requirements.

The inspector does not have discretion other than to order compliance with the act if something is brought in the form of a complaint to the inspector. The inspector’s job is to determine whether the legislative standards have been met. The advice is that the reasonableness is that of the Legislature itself.

The Legislative Counsel also made the point about the provision of an appeal to the employment standards board, and that being a further opportunity to test whether the situation complies or does not comply with the standards imposed by the act.

The advice of Legislative Counsel, which is consistent with our initial reaction yesterday, was that it would not be supportive of making the amendment to bring in (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I reached out to a personal injury lawyer about this and I asked him the question and

he saw no reason why, pardon the pun, it wouldn't be reasonable to add the word 'reasonable' in there.

Premier MacLauchlan: I might add, Mr. Chair, the other point that was raised yesterday was whether other jurisdictions have terminology or language similar to what has been in the Prince Edward Island legislation and is proposed to be continued, and the advice from counsel was that other jurisdictions do not seem to incorporate the suggested drafting change.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Premier, you're saying that the standards that are outlined in the act outline what the actual inspector can do, so they cannot do anything more than what the act outlines. Is that right?

Premier MacLauchlan: Compliance with the act and the act is in effect – it's more requirements, you might say, than standards.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay, so with that, I will withdraw that motion then on part A and we will move onto part B then.

Chair: Is there unanimous consent to withdraw the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Chair: The amendment, sorry?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: Do we still want to read section by section?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question has to do with (4) (b) in Section 1 where of course we talk about the inspector directing the employer to: "rectify any injury caused to the person injured or make compensation for the injury". This is a new clause to the legislation that really

wasn't covered in the overview, as far as I can tell. My question is: How does this work together with the Workers Compensation Board? Because it seems that the inspector is actually taking the place of the Workers Compensation Board based on this legislation, at least some cases.

Adam Peters Manager: The proposed clause offers greater flexibility to the inspector to order compliance in a fair and equitable manner. So that would be that if, for example, an individual was owed a day's vacation, that they could take that as either vacation or if it was pay, so they would allow that flexibility for the order. If the determination was that he was owed a day's pay and the employer and the employee came to an agreement that he could take a day of vacation, they would allow that flexibility.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, but it doesn't say vacation. It says compensation for the injury. Also, I would like you to clarify what rectify any injury costs to the person actually means. It seems to me that really what we're talking about here is sort of what happens with workers' compensation. And I'm wondering if you could speak up a bit. I'm having trouble hearing you, sorry.

Adam Peters Manager: The intent was to allow for the problem that has been identified to be resolved. That would be the injury that's in place. It's not actually a physical injury or something along that line. That would still remain the purview of workers' compensation or the legislation.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Is the term "injury" defined in the legislation?

Premier MacLauchlan: We should be able to get the answer to that. We don't have the definitions section here so maybe we can see about getting you the response to that.

Mr. Trivers: I think I can probably look it up here quickly myself as well.

My concern is I think it really does need to be defined, and perhaps it is the legal term for injury, but I think currently, I mean, it might be misconstrued as being an injury, as in a physical injury. I'm just concerned about that because there's a lot of concerns that have been expressed to me by various people around workers' compensation. By adding this clause in here, if there's any room to interpret that as a physical injury I think it could have large ramifications for those people.

Chair: Do you want to come back to that or (Indistinct)?

Mr. Trivers: I almost have it here.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I have to wonder about that also, Chair, and Premier.

Rectify any injury seems to me to be awfully open to interpretation. Rectify any injury. If I have a business and my employee breaks his arm, how am I to rectify that injury? See what I mean? It seems to be awfully open to interpretation. How can I rectify, as the employer, his broken arm? Can you explain that?

Premier MacLauchlan: What has been suggested in the response is that injury here does not refer to a physical or medical injury, but rather something the person has suffered as a result of a failure to comply with the employment standards.

Leader of the Opposition: So then I would have to ask, Chair or Premier, is that the correct wording that should be used?

Premier MacLauchlan: It's a good question and I apologize –

Leader of the Opposition: I don't want to have to (Indistinct) reworded.

Premier MacLauchlan: I apologize that we don't – did you find whether injury is defined?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Yes, so I brought up the *Employment Standards Act* and this is, of course, the unchanged act, the existing one.

The term injury appears four times in the act, and in the first case it is used in the section 22.11(a)(i): “states that the person's life is at risk as a result of an illness or injury”. The next case – it's in (ii) of that same area: “estimates the time period during which the person is expected to need care or treatment for the illness or injury”. Then moving down to 22.2(2): “... a medical practitioner certifying that the employee is or was unable to work due to illness or injury”. Then in section 30(14) (e) (ii): “rectify an injury caused to the person injured or make compensation therefor”.

That fourth case really sounds like a very similar wording to what we're talking about in the amendment so it does not have a –

An Hon. Member: Definition,

Mr. Trivers: – definition of injury in there.

I would love to get your opinion. I'll stop talking in a minute here, and understand if you think that will cause confusion to people who actually are looking for compensation for their physical injury.

Premier MacLauchlan: We're told that there hasn't previously been a conflict, which is where the question arose in the first place, between workers' compensation and the employment standards in this sense.

The question which is now being raised as to whether the act could benefit from a definition of injury to then capture what it means for the purpose of this legislation in (4) (b) and in the other provisions identified by the Member from Rustico-Emerald I think is one that has some merit and something that we should be willing to take a look at to see if an injury – that that term should be defined.

Leader of the Opposition: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I'll have to ask the (Indistinct) – I'm thinking maybe we should ask for an amendment to be placed in the act that a definition be applied on the word injury. The act should be – that word should be amended to – amend the act so that there's a definition in there on the word injury to define it.

Premier MacLauchlan: What I might – I believe the – I have another person (Indistinct) I may comment on this.

I think perhaps the better approach, given the question that has been raised and that (4)(b) is new and has been added to ensure that the inspector has a greater, what I'm told, is flexibility, perhaps the better thing to do would be to proceed to delete (4)(b) and thereby we could proceed with the main purpose

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Premier MacLauchlan: – of this amendment, which is to lift the cap so that – it's really the protection of employees that's behind this, and to permit employees, as is the case in other provinces, to receive awards in excess of \$5,000.

Leader of the Opposition: So you're suggesting, Premier, that we delete (4)(b)?

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Would that also – I'll jump right ahead then – delete, at the same time, I guess it's (11)(e)(ii) on the following page? Because, it uses the exact same wording.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yeah.

Leader of the Opposition: I'd agree with that.

Adam Peters Manager: That section (Indistinct).

Premier MacLauchlan: Now I'm told that section was already in the act. The alternative here may be to bring this back or do – delete –

Adam Peters Manager: The intent was to approve pieces in coordination with (Indistinct).

Premier MacLauchlan: Yeah, so you see (11) – and you're quite right to point this out – that 11(e)(ii) is already in the legislation and the amendment to include (4)(e) is there for consistency with 11(b)(ii) – 11(c) – (e)(ii).

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to point out before we get too carried away in this, these kinds of terms are often left open-ended and undefined because the case law defines them over the course of time. I don't have a specific knowledge in relation to the *Employment Standards Act* nor injury, but I'll give you an example.

Damages is the general term used for any mode of compensation in law, and so it's generally open-ended in terms of its definition. I doubt very much that you'd find a definition in any of our provincial statutes –

Leader of the Opposition: I can see that.

Mr. J. Brown: – and it's meant to be that way.

Typically, and I think in this case – and I took a very quick look there a few minutes ago at the first couple of sections of the act which usually will outline the purpose and the application of it, and then you'd have the same in the *Workers Compensation Act* purpose and application there, and you look at the two of them and you'd have to see whether – and I haven't done that, so I don't know. But like I said, I just want to make the point that before we consider defining something or throwing it out, it's more than likely been defined by a court someplace in time. Presuming our legislation's not too different than it would be in Ontario or wherever.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

I guess I'm just looking for clarification with regards to the injury. I guess I'm not, again, looking for a definition of injury, but I just want to know whether an injury would

mean physical injury or could be attributed to harassment and bullying in the workplace that caused stress on an employee. Would an inspector ever get involved in a situation such as that?

Adam Peters Manager: Basically, it would be regarding employment standards, so if there was anything that was defined within the act that was in violation of one of those sections of the employment standards, then that's when the inspector would become involved.

Mr. Aylward: Okay, so again my question would be: Could this be construed to also include bullying or harassment in the workplace by a manager to a subordinate?

Adam Peters Manager: I don't believe that that's covered within the *Employment Standards Act*.

Mr. Aylward: Pardon me, sir?

Adam Peters Manager: I don't believe that's covered within the *Employment Standards Act*. I believe we're discussing minimum wage, hours of work, right to pay, along those lines.

Mr. Aylward: Okay. Again, the reason I was asking is just when we start talking about injury, if you were in a volatile situation in your workplace, that you had a manager that was causing you immense stress through bullying and –

Leader of the Opposition: Could be a coworker.

Mr. Aylward: Could be a coworker that caused that employee then to go off and have a heart attack. We talk all the time about PTSD and those kind of mental health issues. I just want to know where that falls in under the *Employment Standards Act*.

Adam Peters Manager: To my knowledge it's not within the *Employment Standards Act*. There would be other avenues, I'm assuming, for that, that action.

Mr. Aylward: All right, thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for your consideration, Mr. Premier, and stranger on the floor.

But I wanted to raise that as a concern, and if you're satisfied with the wording and the use of the term injury, and you want to carry on with the bill, I don't have an issue with that. But I'll leave that up to you as the person who did bring the bill to the floor and understands it best to decide the best way to move forward with this.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Chair, I appreciate how the Member from Rustico-Emerald has said that.

What I will do in return is bring back to the House some explanation of how this provision under what is currently (11)(e)(ii) has actually been interpreted or used through the experience in the case law, as well as then to shed light for the benefit of members what it will mean to add (4)(b).

Mr. Trivers: That satisfies me. Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thanks, Chair.

So are we going to – we're not going to delete (4)(b). We're going to come back with an explanation on that.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'll bring you something in writing –

Leader of the Opposition: Can we table the bill or put the bill off until that explanation comes back?

Premier MacLauchlan: You could do that, or we could take it through second reading on the understanding that this issue is –

Leader of the Opposition: If you don't mind, Premier, I'd like to take the bill back off the floor until we come back with the explanation and pass it again.

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

My question was in regard to the inquiry about bullying, if people have bullying in the workplace. Would that not go, if it was an egregious harassment or complaint, to the human rights commission? Would that be an avenue?

Adam Peters Manager: I'm assuming that would be an avenue that would be able to be explored –

Ms. Biggar: As opposed to *Employment Standards Act*.

Adam Peters Manager: I don't believe it falls underneath our act.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah, okay. Thank you.

Chair: Just to seek clarification, we're going to hold this?

Premier MacLauchlan: Can you round up something on that?

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. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2)*, 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. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

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 grant of capital supply to Her Majesty.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I will ask the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point to come and Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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

Hon. members, we are going to start today on page 17, Justice and Public Safety.

Could we have permission to bring a stranger on the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Granted.

Chair: Thank you.

Good afternoon. Could you please state your name and your position for the record?

Jim Miles Executive Director: Jim Miles, executive director of fiscal management.

Chair: Thank you.

Hon. members, page 17.

Equipment. "Appropriations provided for equipment." 9-1-1 System Upgrades: 200,000. Corporate Registry: 250,000. Total Equipment: 450,000.

We have a question from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

This 9-1-1 system upgrade, I don't understand why we are not looking at, as the province, one central 9-1-1 dispatch instead of operating three. Why isn't the province looking at that? We have the RCMP telecoms, we also have 9-1-1 in Summerside, and we have a 9-1-1 in Charlottetown. For a population of 140,000 people, why are we not looking at one central 9-1-1?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: (Indistinct) question that the hon. member is raising may well be something that comes to light from the policing radio.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: This system upgrade, what actually is that?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, you will see if you look out across the future years that in this year there is 200,000 and then in the four subsequent years there will be in each of those years 150,000.

This year the upgrade is the texting to 9-1-1 that we'll have seen already implemented in subsequent years. Starting in 2017-2018 there is a mapping upgrade software to enable responders to have a more efficient knowledge of where it is they are to go. In 2018-2019 there is an IP phone upgrade, and further years there is a recorder upgrade, digital imagery upgrade, and a video and photo upgrade as you get out to 2021-2022.

This is part of a multi-year plan, and I think we can see this year the texting to 9-1-1 a very clear demonstration of what can be accomplished in upgrades.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

I don't know whether to ask the Minister of Finance or the Premier. Can you elaborate a little more on the texting?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: People who are registered as having a hearing disability or being deaf can register with their service provider, which they do, and then that translates over to the 9-1-1 system automatically, so that when they're in a situation where they want to make a 9-1-1 – let's call it a call – they are able to do it by text messaging.

Chair: Shall the section carry?

Some Hon. Members: Carried.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Just on the next line, corporate registry. I'm just wondering what the quarter of a million dollars is for there. I looked on page 3 for your five-year projections and it's just a one-time.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: This is a contract with an external consultant group, Davis Pier Consulting out of Halifax, who have well-known expertise in the development implementation of a corporate registry. This is a one-time expenditure related to putting in place this corporate registry and that would be, over a period of time, recovered through the fees of those who use the registry.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: But exactly what is that registry that's costing taxpayers 250,000?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: You will recall that in legislation in the spring of last year we brought in the business identifier, which is consistent with other Maritime Provinces, so this is to go digital with a registry that has been in place on paper for some time.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Just wondering: Was that contract tendered?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Let me say I'm pretty sure that it was, a contract of that scale, I'm pretty sure the answer is yes, but I can't actually point you to the tendered document.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Could you bring something back to indicate or to clearly show that there was a tender put out for that?

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Capital Improvements. “Appropriations provided for Capital improvements to properties.” Correctional Centre Improvements: 265,000. Total Capital Improvements: 265,000.

Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks, Chair.

Again, with the facilities that we have here on Prince Edward Island, and some of them are starting to age, I appreciate that we would have to have improvements.

Again, when I go back to page 3 at your five-year outlook, you go from 265,000 this year up to 1.265 the following year, 2019-2020, 2.285 million, and in 2020-2021, 5.4 million.

I'm just wondering: What's the long-term plan there over the next three or four years?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, the smaller of the numbers the hon. member asks about are annual maintenance, you might call it, or upgrades to a facility, which he quite correctly points out is of a certain age, now approaching 30-years-old.

This year it's air handling. In a further year there's additional air handling, then there's LED lighting and so on, the kind of thing that comes with a facility of that scale.

The larger numbers refer to, as you'll see on page 3, two issues that are very much on the minds of our correctional and criminal justice and, you might say, mental health systems.

The first of the two is the accommodation for female offenders. When the provincial correctional centre was built, now several decades ago, there was accommodation in terms of individual cells for up to four female offenders. If you look over the past year, or the past full 12 months, 2015-2016, the occupancy of that facility, there were 244 days when we had more than four women offenders in custody.

Though what's currently being done is there's more of, what I'll call, a dorm style accommodation for women offenders. This is something that requires a higher standard in terms of their correctional treatment and their privacy. That's clearly on the horizon, and it's something that would, of course, be back before the House as we look at a future capital budget.

The second piece that is identified there is the ability, with the appropriate physical arrangements for safety, to deal with patients that have particular forensic issues. Something that has been, as I'm sure the hon. member is well aware of, concern, both in terms of our facilities here in the province and the demand that has been places on having Prince Edward Island offenders with forensic needs go to East Coast Forensic Hospital in Dartmouth.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you.

Chair, I'm just wondering: Would the short answer be that they're expanding one of our facilities?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Yes.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: One last question.

I'm wonder if the Premier could provide me with what the daily cost is to incarcerate an individual here on Prince Edward Island.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'd be happy to provide that. I don't have it at hand.

Mr. Aylward: So, you could bring that back, Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

The Premier could bring that information back?

Premier MacLauchlan: Will do.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

Premier, I'm getting information from the PDs, the police academy, and also the RCMP that there's a move by the department of justice officials or bureaucrats to push RCMP practices on the PDs when they do 75% of all Stats Canada calls on the Island.

That was also alluded to in standing committee. In one particular thing is in regards to is active shooter and IARD. The RCMP use IARD, which is Immediate Action Rapid Deployment tactics, when responding to active shooters. Charlottetown PD, along with the police academy in Summerside, use active shooter.

I'm wondering: Is it true? Why would we have the officials in the department of justice pushing the PDs to that type of training when it doesn't go with their model or the calls that they're dealing with?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, this is an example of the issues that have, I might say, come to light, or that are being considered in the course of the policing review.

With a population of fewer than 150,000 people there's, in the nature of the enterprise, a question of consistent standards. Notably, when you get in the area

of serious crime, for example, an active shooter is a good example.

That's exactly what is being considered as an example in the review, and that report will be forthcoming.

Chair: Shall it carry?

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Premier, can you explain the PICS radio system to me?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Chair, the PICS radio system was adopted to replace a system that is 25 years old, or was.

It was first acquired, I believe – the system that it replaced was adopted in 1992, if I'm not mistaken.

Over the course of 2015-2016 the province, in its own operations, and then in collaboration with, and with the financial support of the province, worked with the various fire services for those services to have the same system as the RCMP, two of the three municipal police forces, the first responders, as well as the ability, or the interoperability, with the other two provinces; Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Premier, can you tell me how much this system cost?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Chair.

It was in the capital budget of the previous year and the number – a capital investment of 3.2 million, and a project implementation of 200,000.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Premier, can you tell me if that went out to tender?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I'd have to confirm that. I can't say for sure.

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Premier, you mean to tell me you spend 3.2 million dollars and you can't tell me if that went out to tender?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Like I said, I'll be happy to come back and tell you for sure.

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

Chair: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Premier, I can't understand. You spent 13.2 million and you never sent that out to tender?

Chair: Thirteen?

Mr. LaVie: I will be waiting for your reply, Premier, and if that did not go out to tender I will have more questions for you. I will have more. It is a good system. I use that system. It's an Island-wide system, but if that 3.2 million and if you spent taxpayers' money without a tender I will be asking questions on that Premier.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Premier, do you have a reply? No?

Premier MacLauchlan: I said I would bring that back.

Chair: Great, thanks.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

Total Capital Expenditure – Justice and Public Safety: 715,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, we're going to page 15.

Ms. Mundy: Just in response to questions that were asked yesterday during Capital Budget, I do have some answers here that, if possible, I can –

Chair: Under family, okay.

Ms. Mundy: Under Family and Human Services, yes.

Yesterday the Member from Stratford-Kinlock asked to have a breakdown for all of the projects and locations of capital improvements for housing residential services. I do have an attachment here that I will table.

As well, the Member from Stratford-Kinlock wanted to know about the policy around the use and replacement of generators in seniors' housing. I also have a copy of the policy.

The Member from Stratford-Kinlock also asked if the annual grant amount to QCRS could be provided. As the most recent contract dated April 1st 2016, the amount of funding is \$3,623,800. I would table those documents.

Chair: Great thanks.

Minister, if you could just give it to a Page she'll bring it over to our Clerk.

Thank you.

Ms. Mundy: Perfect.

Chair: We're on page 15, Health PEI.

Chair (Dumville): I will call the committee back to order.

We're on page 15.

Capital Expenditure

Health PEI

Equipment. "Appropriations provided for the purchase of hospital equipment." Total Equipment: 8,350,800.

Mr. Trivers: Question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I just wanted to, of course, get the breakdown of what that hospital equipment is.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: The first one would be the QEH annual equipment drive, which is 100% revenue offset, 2 million; and the Prince County Hospital, same equipment drive revenue offset 100%, 1,108,000; provincial renal hemodialysis machine replacement, 194,100; the Western Hospital Dialysis water filtration upgrade, 319,400; and the QEH linear accelerator, 4,511,800.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I was wondering if you can just describe what you mean by it has 100% offset. Does that mean the money is raised by the QEH Foundation and the PCH Foundation and they give you that money, Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Is there a breakdown of how that money is going to be used?

Mr. Roach: There was a nuclear medicine spectrometer, 925,000, a vascular system, 200,000, ICU and CCU monitors, 280,000, PCU monitoring, 200,000, urology instruments, 300,000, digital radiography unit was 550,000.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: I have one question –

Mr. Roach: And the PCH –

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, that was my next question, right, for PCH, yes.

Mr. Roach: For PCH the beds were 100,000, CT scanners, 756,000, electrocardiogram unit, 120,000, tissue processors, 65,000, portable fluoroscopic unit, 259,000.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I was wondering – when you purchase all of this equipment it's very expensive equipment. Do you put out tenders for this equipment? Are there multiple bidders, typically?

Mr. Roach: They go out for tenders, yeah.

Mr. Trivers: And there are typical multiple bidders? Chair?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Trivers: Sure.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I know that in most other areas – we can look to page 3 and see what the next five years of expenditure are going to be there, but in the hospital equipment we don't get that. I'm just wondering why that's the case, why we don't see the next five years of estimated capital expenditures on hospital equipment.

Jim Miles Executive Director: All of the equipment is combined with the health facility line so there's – so if you add the health facility line and the equipment line you should get the same number.

Mr. Aylward: So if you were to take the 8.3 million and the 5.5 million it would add up to the 13.853 million on the first line on the five-year (Indistinct).

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, all right.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Aylward: It does (Indistinct), you're right (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: A couple of the pieces of equipment that you just mentioned, minister, were the linear accelerator, the cancer treatment, which is 4-plus million dollars, and the digital x-ray equipment which was half a million dollars.

I'm wondering, with the recent revocation of the radiation regs in the health act, whether there is any sort of plan to allow private clinics to come to Prince Edward Island and provide radiographic services.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: There are no plans at this point in time, but I wanted to clarify a little bit about the way the equipment drive stuff works.

These foundations raise the money. The reason why it is channeled through us is that we sometimes can have purchase agreements. We can buy them in bulk, as an example, so all of the hospitals together may be able to buy a better deal. If you're buying five of something versus one of them individually you might be able to get a better arrangement around that.

That's the premise behind the foundations determining what they feel their equipment needs are. Each hospital usually has a committee that works with the foundation to identify what equipment would be purchased, so that's why it's 100% offset in the respect that it's not necessarily money out of our budget.

Now, there are circumstances where we put money into a purchase of equipment. I think we did it in Souris. We did it in O'Leary and Alberton when they bought some diagnostic equipment. We may provide money to the foundations for funding, but in general terms it's the hospital's equipment, but we purchase it on their behalf because we can get better deals by buying it in bulk in some cases, and most of those things are all tendered out.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

With the repeal of the recent legislation on radiation safety in the province, we do – as I understand it, we still have some policy within the health department regarding radiation safety, but none outside that, outside of the health care system. You mentioned in a reply to a question from I think it was the Member from Stratford-Kinlock the other day that private operators, dentists, for example, like myself, would be responsible for radiation safety within their offices.

Again, I just want to ask the question because I've got quite – I want to make sure of the answer. There are no plans to allow private – because Islanders go to Moncton, for example, to have an MRI done at considerable cost. Those facilities don't currently exist on PEI. Is there anybody who's approached government or is there a government plan to allow private radiation clinics to provide those services here on PEI?

Mr. Henderson: Not specifically that I'm aware of, but we do have arrangements. As an example, the vet college may use some of our equipment by times to come in and do a certain procedure or whatever within that particular institution.

If there was an organization that wanted to set up a private clinic here, I don't think there's anything we can do to stop that, but would we use it? We possibly could if we were backlogged in certain circumstances to – it's no different than when people do go over across to get an MRI. We still use the information that they get back. It's always the question of whether we pay for it or not. If there was a situation where our machines might have been broken down or are in repair or something like that, we would look at the situation and possibly pay for some situations (Indistinct) that nature, but that's rarely, and it has to usually be approved before we go that route.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I do have more (Indistinct).

Chair: I'll just (Indistinct) make way for the Member from Stratford-Kinlock and be back to you.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

It's a great line of questioning there because it sounds like the doors –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Wide open.

Mr. Aylward: Exactly. Just with regards to the 2016-2017, I'm wondering what's changed since the budget estimate was prepared and now that we're forecasting to be over and above what was originally estimated. (Indistinct) represents about 700,000.

Mr. Roach: The increase there was the increase in Prince County at the PCH.

Mr. Aylward: In what –

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) revenue offsets that we talked about there. It was (Indistinct).

Mr. Aylward: Okay, all right. Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I just want to go back again to the statement you just made, minister, that if a private company wanted to come to Prince Edward Island to provide radiographic services we couldn't stop them. I understand that. But, now that we do not have any safety regulations in legislation, we may not be able to stop them but we could certainly be able to protect Islanders, both those receiving treatment and those operating the machines.

Without legislation, there's nothing outside government facilities that would control that.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: The reality in that particular situation is they do fall under the occupational health and safety guidelines for workplace safety. Workers' compensation would play a role, so if there were issues that a particular worker felt that it wasn't safe – I know in Health PEI's situation, all their equipment is usually set up and put in place and deemed to be safe to commence with, and it would be up to us if we felt that

there was some complaints around that to then get somebody in to inspect it.

But one of the issues was around inspections, that it was hard to find anybody that had the capabilities and training and the cost in doing that. From that perspective we just felt that it wasn't necessary to do that through that way. Occupation, health and safety, and workers' compensation would be just as effective.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm aware, of course, in my previous life as a dentist, we used to have somebody come in every couple of years and inspect it. I believe the fellow came through Ottawa, if I remember right, and there was a fee charged through our dental community in order to pay for that.

But the critical thing was that he was specifically trained in order to do a proper inspection and check that the machine was working properly and the radiation was not leaking at all, all of those things. In not having regulations outside the publicly funded health care system, and expecting dentists in this situation to look after their own radiation, they're just not trained to do that. It would be like asking the bus driver to fix his bus when it breaks down. It's not something that dentists are trained to do.

I think there could be a real big problem here if private service providers were to come here.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: I guess from our perspective most of our radiation types of equipment we have servicing contracts with the companies that usually provide the equipment to maintain them and do periodical inspections. From Health PEI's perspective, we continue to make sure equipment is safe, not only for the staff but as the people using it. Once again, I guess the private sector that utilizes that equipment, it would be up to them I guess to do the same thing should they decide to do that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Does the department have any plans to reintroduce legislation that

would cover the providers outside the medical system?

Mr. Henderson: Not at this time.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Okay, continuing on.

Total Equipment: 8,350,800.

Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) table something.

Chair: Hon. member, you have the floor.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Currie: Mr. Chair, I'd like to answer (Indistinct) budget.

Chair: Okay, sure.

Mr. Currie: I just was asked a few questions from opposition: one around museums and where those capital budgets are going to be spent, particularly on Beaconsfield and the Carriage House; questions on early learning from the Leader of the Third Party; questions from the member just on music instruments and records centre expansion.

So I just want to table that.

Chair: Okay.

Mr. MacKay: On the long-term care facilities, I assume the budget estimate, the budget forecast that was –

Chair: I haven't –

An Hon. Member: He has to go first.

Chair: Hon. member, I've got to read this section first.

Mr. MacKay: Oh, I'm sorry. Sorry, Chair.

Chair: I thought your question was from the last section.

Mr. MacKay: No.

Chair: Capital Improvements. "Appropriations provided for Capital improvements, planning and redesign of Health infrastructure." Health Facilities: 5,502,500. Long-Term Care Facilities: 10,852,500. Capital Repairs: 2,000,000. Total Capital Improvements: 18,355,000.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

The long-term care facilities, the budget estimate of 10.6 and the budget forecast of 2.7, I assume that was the manors, was it?

Mr. Roach: That's correct.

Mr. MacKay: Okay, Chair?

Chair: Yes.

Mr. MacKay: That \$8 million, where was that \$8 million transferred to? Where did it go?

Mr. Roach: It didn't go anywhere. It just wasn't spent.

Mr. MacKay: It just wasn't spent?

Mr. Roach: That's right.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I'm wondering: Is there a dollar amount on the demolition of the old PE home at this point in time?

Ms. Biggar: I didn't hear that.

Mr. J. Brown: The old PE home, is there a dollar amount attached to the demolition cost of it at this time?

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

Ms. Biggar: No, we don't have that in this year's Capital Budget.

Mr. J. Brown: I'm not wondering whether it's in the Capital Budget. I'm wondering whether there's a dollar amount attached to it. Is there a cost associated with it?

Ms. Biggar: We'd have to go back and look at what estimates have been done in the past, but I would say it's probably well above \$1 million or more, but that is just a guess, hon. member. I certainly will find out what past estimates have been done.

Mr. J. Brown: And if you – do we have an idea – sorry, Chair, follow up question –

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Do we have an idea of the cost to operate it on an ongoing basis?

Mr. Roach: That's operational.

Mr. Henderson: I'd have to look that up (Indistinct) I don't think it's too significant.

Ms. Biggar: The heat's been shut off.

Mr. Roach: That wouldn't be in the Capital Budget. That would be operational cost.

Ms. Biggar: It's on our operational.

Mr. J. Brown: The two are (Indistinct) to the state of it, I think, though.

Can you bring that back, minister?

Mr. Henderson: (Indistinct).

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you.

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

Ms. Biggar: I just was going to say, we have to leave one section on because of the heating system that's connected to the city, but the rest of the heat in the building has now been decommissioned.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, back to the long-term care facilities and the fact you didn't spend that 8

million. Where has that 8 million gone? Is that part of the 6.8 million or 6 million that lessened your deficit by?

Mr. Roach: That's unspent dollars, it wasn't spent.

Ms. Compton: That's part of decreasing your deficit, 8 million, it's somewhere.

Mr. Roach: The deficit (Indistinct) operated.

Ms. Biggar: That's in operating, not capital.

Ms. Compton: It's not affecting that at all.

Mr. Roach: No.

Mr. LaVie: Surprise, surprise.

Ms. Compton: It's somewhere.

Mr. LaVie: Eight million dollars floating around.

Ms. Compton: It's somewhere.

Chair: Please go through the Chair so Hansard can pick up who is speaking.

Mr. Roach: That will be carried forward.

Ms. Compton: Sorry?

Mr. Roach: That will be carried forward.

Ms. Compton: Be carried forward.

Mr. Roach: That's not so funny, it's just carried forward.

Chair: Total Capital Improvements: 18,355,000.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Total Capital Expenditure – Health PEI: 26,705,800.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Chair (Casey): Hon. members, we're on page 19.

Tourism PEI

Capital Improvements. “Appropriations provided for improvements and upgrades to the Provincial Parks, Confederation Trail and Golf Courses.” Provincial Parks: 300,000. Confederation Trail: 50,000. Golf Courses: 400,000. Total Capital Improvements: 750,000.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, are there any planned improvements to the Links at Crowbush Cove?

Mr. Roach: No.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, you were good to confirm you'd bring back some of the capital improvements to some of the schools. Could you bring back capital improvements to the Links at Crowbush Cove for the last five years?

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

Mr. MacDonald: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you very much.

As I understand, one of the golf courses that we used to own and run is being leased out to a private individual in Mill River. I see that the forecast is that we'll spend just as much on golf courses this year as we did in previous years before we owned it. I'm wondering why, with one less golf course, we're spending just as much money.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Part of the lease agreement with the proposed new owners, which the contract is not up till April 2017. The loss that we shared each year was put back into that lease agreement until that company makes a decision whether they're going to purchase all the facilities or not. It

was status quo for us as far as the balance. Does that make sense to you?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm afraid it doesn't, but I think that's my problem. Can you (Indistinct) again?

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

Mr. MacDonald: There was an approximate loss of the 400,000 up there per year to the provincial government. We took the 400,000 and put that into the lease agreement with the new proposed owners, hopefully. We're in a balance of the same as we were last year in here.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Is that entire 400,000, then, devoted to Mill River in the budget?

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

Mr. MacDonald: No.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm sorry, Chair. Thank you, Chair.

Some of that would be out of the operating budget then, would it?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

An Hon. Member: Yeah, Crowbush.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, got it.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

I guess it's a generic question with the parks, the trail, and the golf courses. Are there any equipment upgrades through any of that?

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

Mr. MacDonald: I believe there are upgrades on an annual basis and a review is done each year. I can't tell you exactly what they may have purchased unless Jim can.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Yes, just give me a moment here to go through it.

Front mount mower, 35,000, an ATV – no, that's – yeah, 20,000. That's it for equipment.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: I guess my question, provincial parks budgeted for 300,000, is that equipment into that price?

Jim Miles Executive Director: Anything over 10,000.

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Mr. MacKay: Right, so that's built right into that budget.

Mr. Roach: Yes.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

There's an issue I raised to the minister last summer and I believe it could be easily addressed in a capital budget.

There's a restaurant called On the Dock Eatery, a new restaurant down in North Rustico out in the harbour there which is outside the town of North Rustico in the area of provincial jurisdiction. They have the restaurant there, Chair, and they also have a fishermen's museum that's part of it, that was there prior to the restaurant opening up. There are also some washrooms there that, in fact, the general public had used at least prior to last summer, two years ago.

However, it was a great expense for the owners to pump out those toilets. Anyhow, the suggestion was made that for only 2,500 these toilets could be pumped out and left

open to the public and it would provide a great service to tourists in North Rustico, because the nearest public washrooms are over in the national park and there are a lot of tourists around there.

Unfortunately, what they had to do there, Chair, was actually close the toilets to the public and turn people away. It actually caused a few arguments.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: The municipality doesn't, it's a provincial jurisdiction.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) the municipality.

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

Mr. Trivers: My question is, Chair: Can we make that happen, please?

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

Mr. MacDonald: I think we're dealing with private entrepreneur to private issue. I'm not sure of the boundaries as far as the legalities of us, the liabilities that we may face going into that facility and pumping out their toilets (Indistinct) sewage system. Are they able to connect to the municipality on their sewage?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: No, they're not part of the municipality, they're provincial land. That's why they need to pump out. There is no sewage system there.

The thing is, this is the sort of thing the department of tourism could, as a grant, as part of perhaps – maybe there is a capital project that could be done to make it viable to have a septic system there, I don't know. It would be really great for tourism in the North Rustico harbour area.

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

Mr. MacDonald: We have never received anything from the town of Rustico in that

regard, I don't believe, not that I'm aware of.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: This is not part of the town of Rustico.

Mr. MacDonald: You're referencing Rustico, though, so I'm just saying that you're referencing the town of Rustico in tourism, so I'm referencing back saying if they approached us maybe we could do something.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: This is not part of the town of North Rustico, this is in a provincial area. It's still referred to as North Rustico, but not the town of Rustico. That's why my constituents have approached me because it's part of a provincial jurisdiction. The town can't do anything in that area. That's why I approached you last summer and I'm just looking for an update to see if we can make something happen here.

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

Mr. MacDonald: If we receive an application in writing, someone – whoever is pumping out the toilets, the sewer – maybe we can do something (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I will contact (Indistinct) minister.

Chair: Shall this section carry? Carried.

Total Capital Expenditure – Tourism PEI: 750,000.

Shall the total carry? Carried.

Chair: Hon. members, we're on page 21.

Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy

Land. "Appropriations provided for land purchases." Land Purchases: 365,000. Total Land: 365,000.

Shall the section carry?

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

A question on the land purchases, 365,000. What land would that be?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: The annual budget consists of 250 for Resource Land Acquisition Fund purchases and 65,000 for Eastern Habitat Joint Venture purchases through Ducks Unlimited.

Chair: Hon. members, I'm having a hard time hearing the question.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Any time there's land purchased through the department, is there a record of what land's purchased in a run of year? Where does that money come from?

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

Ms. Biggar: Any time there's any land goes through the department there's always a record of that through our lands department.

These particular ones, Resource Land Acquisition Fund, they're usually properties that the department of CLE has identified as, like, a natural habitat. There is a fund that's set-up on an annual basis to acquire that, as well as with Ducks Unlimited. We have a record of all land purchases that are acquired for this particular Resource Land Acquisition Fund, yes.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

The land purchases through the Cornwall bypass, where would they be at?

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

Ms. Biggar: Anything to do with the Trans-Canada Highway extension, there were obviously – back in the 1990s some land was already purchased. Any land that was purchased for phase 1 in regards to some areas that we needed for the purchase of doing phase 1 would be – it's in the next section, but I would have to get detailed information on that, but it's not in this section.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

I guess I can ask that question later, but I was wondering, would you be willing to, any land purchases, through any project over the last year, could you bring that back with a breakdown of what the landowners were paid for each one?

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

Ms. Biggar: So what you're saying you want: Any land purchased as part of any project our department did in the last year?

Mr. MacKay: That's right.

Ms. Biggar: We can start work on that, but you would be surprised the amount of little pieces of property that we have to get to give a right of way, all those kinds of things.

Mr. LaVie: That's okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: I didn't realize there were many, Chair.

Maybe anything over a 50,000 threshold? Could you –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) purchased.

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

Ms. Biggar: Just to be clear, you want a list of any land purchased over 50,000 for any projects in the last year?

Mr. MacKay: I guess –

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

What I would like to know is, basically, any project, for example – and this wouldn't fall under it, but the Stanley Bridge roundabout. If there was land purchases that happened there. The Cornwall bypass, the lands that are being used for that. I would like to know who was bought out, at what price they were given for it, just because it's taxpayers' dollars and we're trying to be open and transparent. If you could bring that and, like I say, anything over 50,000 –

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) projects.

Mr. MacKay: Those two just came to light.

Basically, anything, any major project over the last year that has required taxpayers' money to buy and purchase a piece of property. I would like to have that disclosed, if we could.

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

Ms. Biggar: Just for clarification, for the Trans-Canada Highway extension, we have not completed land purchases with all the affected 20 landowners. I wouldn't be able to provide that to you.

We'll go back and look at that threshold that you identified.

Chair: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Chair.

Even though all the land purchases –

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Mr. MacKay: – might not have –

Chair: The hour has been called.

Mr. Roach: Madam 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. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having under consideration the grant of capital 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: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, that this House adjourn until Thursday, December 8th, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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