

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature met at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (I)

Speaker (Casey): The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I first recognize you and your role this week and look forward to working out all the ways of the House with your guidance, and of course your staff.

I want to welcome our visitors in the gallery. I see Jeremy MacDonald is here; the mayor of Kensington, Rowan Caseley, is here; Eddie Lund, Carol Carragher; a great group watching out on the Internet or from EastLink; and of course special greetings to those from York-Oyster Bed.

Two notes of recognition. The first a sad one, which is to express sympathy to the family and friends of Barb Mullaly, a former athletic director at UPEI with whom I had the honour to serve, and a great contributor to our community, most recently as president of seniors' college, and in many other ways that Barb will be missed.

On a happier note, to acknowledge all the good folks who ensured that we responded to yesterday's storm, whether that was in getting students home from school safely or, in the case of our own transportation of the department of transportation and infrastructure, our contractors or others, to see to it that the roads were kept open or that the conditions were responded to in the way that they were, and that everyone's travelling safely today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Welcome everybody to the gallery today, and welcome everybody from District 19,

and everybody, I hope, had a fun and safe weekend.

It's with great pleasure that I announce something in the House. I wish my utmost extreme congratulations to the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque and his wife Alisha, and their daughter Kennedy, in the news of they're expecting an increase to their family.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) Liberal votes.

Leader of the Opposition: I can't think of – that's two more Conservative votes.

I can honestly say that I can't think of a better Christmas gift, and I wish them all the best.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd like to welcome everybody back to the House. Nice to see you, Carol, again.

I particularly want to make note today of another loss in our community last week of a friend of mine, Bert Tersteeg, a really deeply valued and loved member of the music community here on Prince Edward Island.

Burt came to Canada back in the 1950s from Holland, moved to PEI, I think, in 1965 when he taught at St. Dunstan's University, and he never lost his enthusiasm for music. He was just a tremendous man, and welcomed me and my family here when we moved here 15 years ago with great warmth. He was just a delightful man and he'll be deeply missed.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I want to welcome everybody to the gallery here.

I had the pleasure yesterday to go to the DVA building across the street here for the reopening of the DVA veterans services centre. It was a great event. There's a lot of great employees working at Veterans Affairs there. The veteran has given Canada – when we needed the veteran, they were there, and I can honestly say the employees of DVA are there for the veterans and working hard for them, so I want to send a big thank you out for all the employees of DVA, the great job they do.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Madam Speaker, it's great to be back at it another week.

I'd like to welcome Jeremy MacDonald to the House. Jeremy is the son of the late Lomer who loved politics and loved Prince Edward Islanders. Jeremy is following in the old man's footsteps. He was up and at it early this morning, he tells me, at 3:00 a.m. clearing snow and still managed to get in here today. Great to see him here.

Remind everybody, too, I had an extra little blast from my wife there when I got home last night because I hadn't changed her tires over to winter tires yet. Anybody that has not done that, just a reminder to make sure that happens before too long.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everybody here today, especially Rowan Caseley and Jeremy MacDonald and Eddie. It's good to

have you with us, and all our ladies with us today.

I'd also like to wish a happy birthday to my daughter Tara. It's her birthday today and being the gentleman that I am, I will not reveal her age.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to welcome everyone to the gallery and say hello to everyone back in Evangeline-Miscouche.

I'd also like to give congratulations to the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque on his announcement this week. Wonderful, a set of twins. That will be quite a change to your family.

Also, with your indulgence, I would like to make mention to a very sombre anniversary that did not take place today due to inclement weather and that was the anniversary of the deportation of Acadians back on December 13th, 1758.

J'aimerais (Indistinct) l'anniversaire de la déportation des Acadiens (Indistinct) 1758.

I would like to (Indistinct) the anniversary of the deportation of the Acadians (Indistinct) 1758.

I would also like to make mention to an announcement that I had the privilege to be with the hon. member from downtown Charlottetown yesterday at the college here in Charlottetown with the name change from College Acadie to College de l'Île. It was a very good announcement, and it's nice to see the college and the Wellington area expand to the city of Charlottetown.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and welcome to the chair.

It is great to be back here. Everybody got here safe and sound. Just following on the footsteps of the member from Charlottetown to remind people to, yes indeed, get your winter tires on, and please slow down until you get used to these new inclement weather conditions.

I want to welcome all of the visitors that were mentioned.

Over the weekend I had the honour, actually, to go to the Farmers' Bank in Rustico to recognize the first car on PEI having been imported by Father Belcourt in 1866. We also found out it was the first car accident on Prince Edward Island as well. So congratulations to the Farmers' Bank and to the PEI Antique Car Club.

Also yesterday I had the great honour to name a street in Tyne Valley after a veteran and a great community person, Mr. Clyde Maynard. His family joined us from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to commemorate the Clyde Maynard way in the village of Tyne Valley. It was a stormy event, but it was a great gathering of warmth and friendship at the fire hall afterwards.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's always a pleasure to rise in the House and I would like to say hello to everyone out in the District of Montague-Kilmuir.

I would like to welcome everyone that is in the gallery today, in particular Eddie Lund, Mayor Caseley – I have had the opportunity to work with him over the last 18 months and I can say he is a perfect gentleman – and a former colleague of mine, Dave (Indistinct) from my RCMP days here. Welcome, Dave. And Jeremy MacDonald, and Jeremy I remember from maybe my early days in the RCMP, too, chasing him down the road one day.

I would like to welcome everyone here and I want to congratulate the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque on the forthcoming events. Get some sleep. You're going to need it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today and greet this House, and especially welcome anyone watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald, everyone here in the gallery. Mayor Caseley, it's great to see you here.

I wanted to recognize Robert Stevenson who I know. He's been ill lately, and he's watching from home, I believe. I wanted to say hello to him.

I wanted to recognize all those folks who clear snow professionally in the wintertime. I know that this morning when I was looking out the window and watching my driveway be cleared I was surely appreciative.

Finally, I just wanted to remind everyone who is watching, and everyone here, to really look at buying local when we're shopping this year for Christmas gifts or food. There are so many local craftspeople who sell such great stuff. Especially, I live in New Glasgow, and there are all kinds of places. I know the Toy Factory is a favourite if you're looking for gifts for your young ones. Then, Emily Wells, of course, has her YouMeal service that's expanding. She has food from Glasgow Glen Farm and the Preserve Company, all kinds of great places. Make sure you buy local this season.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

It's a pleasure to rise in the House today and, of course, greet you. It feels natural, once again, to say "Madam Speaker." While we're looking at such lovely faces here, too, when we make the mistake, quite often and say "Madam Speaker" when you're not in the chair.

I had the pleasure to attend a wonderful event this past Sunday evening at The Guild. It was the screening of National Film Board documentary. The title is *Bluefin*. The producer, the gentleman who is responsible for this great work, is an Islander. His name is John Hopkins. The film was based, primarily, out of North Lake, which we all know is the tuna capital, essentially, of the world.

I encourage anyone, especially the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the tourism minister as well, to take some time – it's about a 53-minute film – but to take some time to watch this film. It's very educational. I believe that there's a tremendous opportunity, particularly for tourism around eco-tourism with this film. I strongly encourage anyone to take the time to view that.

Just in closing, I would just like to send out a big thank you to the tremendous volunteers who we have in Stratford with our fire department. They were called out early Sunday morning to a house, the Francis family. They experienced some severe smoke damage in their house. Unfortunately, the three members of that family have been displaced at such an awful time of the year, of course, leading up to Christmas. I want to wish the Francis family all the best, and thank the volunteers. I believe there were approximately 30 volunteers on site for that fire and they just did a tremendous job.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

Welcome back, Madam Speaker.

It is a pleasure today to rise and welcome all viewers who may be watching today from the great district of Charlottetown-Sherwood.

I'd like to welcome all visitors to the gallery. Of course, Eddie Lund is back. It's always great to see Eddie. Jeremy MacDonald is here today, as was mentioned. Jeremy does a great job of keeping the economy of the district of Charlottetown-Sherwood rolling by keeping the parking lot and walkways of the Charlottetown Mall open especially in this busy time, so it's great to have Jeremy in the House today.

Also, as minister responsible for municipalities, it's great to see Rowan Caseley in the gallery today. I certainly hope Rowan has the opportunity to stick around as some important legislation may get to the table there this afternoon, and we may need your support on it, Rowan.

Thanks a lot.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to wish everybody another good day or week in the Legislative Assembly.

I'd like to say hello to everybody who is watching on either EastLink or by Internet at home.

I do wish you well in your new portfolio today. I will be putting you in a chapter of my book. When I do write my personal book –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: – you will be in a chapter.

There are a –

An Hon. Member: It's a children's book, is it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: – few gentlemen at home I'd like to say hello to. The fire district

community council, there are three gentlemen who retired after many years of service. Jack Aitken, Eugene MacAulay, and Leonard MacDonald retired from the fire district community council. There are three new gentlemen to take over from the old and they are: Boyd MacKenzie, David MacAulay, and Brian Ching. They will be taking over and they'll hopefully put in the years of service that the old did.

Again, I want to welcome everyone back, everyone to the gallery and especially to the press. It's great to have the press inside today also because we definitely need the press to get our message out.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am happy to rise in the House today to welcome everybody back and also welcome everyone in the gallery, and to the folks at home in District 21 that are watching.

A special thank you to all of the road crews that have done such a tremendous job to keep our roads clear to get us here all safe today.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is a pleasure to be back in the House again today. A shout-out to everyone in District 4 watching online and on t.v. Welcome to everyone in the gallery.

I would like to also send a shout-out to all of the horsemen in my district, and not only the horsemen in my district, but horsemen across the Island, and especially to Marc Campbell. He recorded 132 wins and broke the record with 131 this weekend, a great young family man who is really a credit to the industry. I want to just say he was on the

bike with Freddie who's owned by the three wise men. I guess it's questionable whether they are three wise men, but they think they are, anyway. They have a lot of fun in the industry and it's great to recognize all the horsemen.

I would also like to send a shout-out to Warren MacLean. He's got a tree farm in Iris. Was very busy on the weekend. We were able to get our live tree and. It's just such a pleasure because you go and you have hot chocolate and it becomes an event. Families love it, and there was definitely a lineup there today, so I just want to send a shout-out to Warren and his wife, Sandra. They do a great job in the district.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mayor Caseley, Eddie Lund, Dave (Indistinct), Jeremy MacDonald of course, Carol Carragher.

I just wanted to say thank you to my executive. We had the annual Christmas breakfast on the weekend and we served over 200 meals and we raised hundreds of dollars for the breakfast program in the area.

I also want to send out condolences to Shane Doucette. Shane's from Rustico and he's relatively – I think he's a year younger than I am, and he passed away the last couple of days. It's going to be a tough Christmas for his family.

But I also want to mention cooperation and thanks to the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald who gave me a call with an issue in his riding relevant to the Internet services. I believe we satisfied the person that you were dealing with, but I wanted to thank you for the cooperation and calling me ASAP, and we acted on it.

I also want to –

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, minister.

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah – thank the Member from Kensington-Malpeque for contributing twofold to our population strategy, and that’s cooperation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

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

Michelle Gaudet

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today and recognize the good will and seasonal generosity of Michelle Gaudet of Christopher Road in Tignish. This compassionate young lady is now in her early 20s and works at Royal Star.

When she showed up at the Tignish Elementary School a few weeks ago to drop off gifts, staff member Carol Anne Gaudette recognized her as a former student. Michelle was coming to deliver shoe boxes for the school’s annual participation in the Samaritan Purse Christmas Shoebox Campaign.

Tignish Elementary has collected over 1,500 shoe boxes over the years, and this kind gesture just shows the caring spirit of the community and the willingness to share with those less fortunate.

Michelle has been saving her own money since last year to buy special items to include in each box. She spent over \$300 to purchase the necessities for each box. She took great care to ensure that each box had a wash cloth, a cake of soap, a hair brush, a bracelet, and a tiny teddy bear. Along with these items, Michelle included a card and picture with a special note.

These boxes go to war-torn countries or disaster-hit areas where children are left with nothing. They are distributed worldwide to children, regardless of race, gender or religion. Please join me in recognizing Michelle Gaudet for her spirit of giving and kindness of heart.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

**Jour du Souvenir acadien 2016/2016
Acadian Remembrance Day**

Mr. J. Brown: *Merci madame la présidente.*

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

C’est avec plaisir que je prends la parole ici pour souligner le Jour du Souvenir acadien.

La cérémonie de commémoration, à laquelle je devais participer aujourd’hui au nom du premier ministre MacLauchlan et du gouvernement provincial, a été annulée en raison du mauvais temps.

It is my pleasure to address the House to highlight the Acadian Remembrance Day.

The commemorative ceremony I was scheduled to attend today, on behalf of Premier MacLauchlan and the provincial government, has been cancelled due to bad weather.

Government’ representatives and community members gather every year in memory of all those who died from diseases and drowning during the Great Deportation, one of the most tragic events in the history of our province. Thousands of Acadians were deported from our island, and unfortunately almost 1,000 died when the transport ships Duke William, Violet and Ruby sank, in 1758.

Merci à la Société Saint-Thomas d’Aquin et à Parcs Canada pour l’organisation de cet événement et pour leur engagement continuel.

Thank you to the Société Saint-Thomas-d’Aquin and Parks Canada for organizing this event and for their ongoing commitment.

It provides an opportunity to celebrate the cultural vitality of Acadian Islanders who have succeeded in maintaining their identity and a common sense of belonging.

Madame la présidente, le gouvernement de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard est ravi de constater que la culture acadienne et la langue française demeurent bien vivantes à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard.

Madam Speaker, the Government of Prince Edward Island is pleased to see that Acadian culture and the French language remain alive and well in Prince Edward Island.

Merci, madame la présidente.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

Speaker: *Merci.* Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Moth Lane Brewery

Mr. MacKay: Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today and recognize the first microbrewery in Prince County.

Moth Lane Brewing, located on the Murray Road just outside Tyne Valley, will be the newest tourism destination in western PEI.

Owner Eric Wagner, who is a former fisherman, is excited about his new business and says that people are searching out craft breweries, trying their beers, and getting to know the people.

Wagner fished lobsters for 35 years and was looking for something new. He decided that turning his former shellfish business building into a brewery was the perfect fit.

The pub has seating for 50 and is lined with sweet smelling pine and plenty of windows. The beer will be brewed on the lower level with a flight of stairs lined up with beautiful stained spindles shaped as paddles. The brewery also features blackboards on walls so guests can leave their name when they leave.

Eric says he wants people to come out here and he will give them reason to.

Eric faced delays and had hoped to have his brewery open this summer, but with delays and setbacks on equipment he will have it

open in time just for Christmas. He had many tourists stop by the brewery this summer and he was able to show them around.

Eric didn't want to sacrifice the quality of his product so he said it probably worked out for the best that it opens later.

I know Eric will have tremendous success with his new business and that tourists and Islanders will flock to his new brewery. I know I'll be making my way up in the New Year to try it out and I hope everyone else can do the same and help support an Island entrepreneur.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Responses to Questions Taken As Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Gas price consumer safeguards

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Last week we spoke about the potential financial impacts the new carbon tax would bring. At the same time, Islanders were hit with a \$0.5 increase to gas and petroleum prices unexpectedly.

Question to the Premier: What consumer safeguards will be in your government's energy strategy to protect Islanders from sticker shock gas prices?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I'm happy to report to the House that on Friday the federal government and the provinces and territories concluded a pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change.

The words "clean growth" are really aimed at taking advantage of the opportunities for Islanders that come with addressing the way in which we use energy, the amount of carbon we are emitting. One of the numbers that I keep in mind is that on an annual basis

Prince Edward Islanders spend out-of-province \$435 million on energy and fuel.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Gas price and job growth

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On an average, a carbon tax would drive the pump price even higher. A \$30 a ton carbon adds at least \$0.6 to \$0.7 more per litre of gas.

Question to the Premier. This government likes to talk about job growth. How much growth will be unlocked with an extra \$0.6 to \$0.7 charged at the pumps?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for mentioning job growth because there should be job growth.

When you think about that \$435 million, if we can reduce the amount of fuel that we're paying for out-of-province – and it's not just the carbon price that we're talking about but the total price per litre or ultimately per ton of these greenhouse gases. That's how our government and I hope everyone in this House, and Islanders all across the province, will go at this, is to look for opportunities so that we can end up with more money in our pockets and to gain opportunities through the commitment to clean growth and climate change.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I love talking petroleum because all your high taxes are doing are driving people across and off the island to buy cheaper gas.

Transportation plays a key, big role in this province in growth. That's why

transportation is one of the two biggest sources of carbon emissions. Most of our exports are moved by road.

Question to the Premier: What good is spending \$65 million for a three-minute shortcut in the name of growth if people can't afford to put gas in their tanks?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, let me speak to the question of the Trans-Canada Highway completion that's been raised here.

This is completing a project that started in the late 1970s. Really, what we're going to have is a proper highway from Tea Hill to DeSable that is going to allow us to continue to compete in the world economy. In 2014 and 2015 alone, in those two years, we reduced our balance of trade deficit by \$230 million, and that's what we're after is clean growth and prosperity for Prince Edward Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Fuel tax relief

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm really concerned about Islanders and how they're going to be able to pay for your new tax, Mr. Premier. Government can help. They can influence the amount Islanders pay for fuel. They can control the level of taxes you take.

Question to the Premier: What action on fuel tax relief will your government take to shield Island consumers from volatile price swings and a carbon tax?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, as members will know, the benchmark price that the federal government will require under the pan-Canadian framework will kick in the first of January 2018.

That gives us some time to design the most effective mechanism and to deal with some of the issues raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, to which we're very sensitive, including, and especially the impact on low-income Islanders, and how we can design instruments that go with this whole package that will enable low-income Islanders to consume less fuel.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Pan-Canadian framework and provincial benefits

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As we've heard today, on Friday the Premier attended meetings in Ottawa where a national climate change plan was developed, the referred to Pan-Canadian framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

This is a question for the Premier: Mr. Premier, what extra benefits were you able to secure for Prince Edward Island because of the steps PEI has already taken to address climate change?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker let me point to one, which is of course the transmission cables that are now in place between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, and the considerable shared investment between the federal government and our province that enables Prince Edward Island to now build on the achievements that have been made in renewable energy for our province and will be able to invest further in renewable energy for both export and especially for local consumption.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We, as Islanders, see climate change impacts first hand. For example, as storm surges erode the Island shoreline. Islanders, being the proactive group that we are, have already

proven leadership in reducing carbon emissions. Close to a third of our electricity comes from wind energy today. Because of this, Islanders contribute only 0.2% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.

Question for the Premier: Mr. Premier, why didn't you secure any extra benefits for Islanders for the steps we've already taken to address climate change?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, that was one of the strong points by which Prince Edward Island arrived at those meetings and entered into the pan-Canadian framework.

It is indeed to get credit for the fact that we have, against a commitment to reduce by 2030, 30% of our greenhouse gas emissions relative to 2005, to acknowledge that we've already achieved a third of that – that's to say 10% of our emissions have already been reduced – and that is a very significant achievement in the context of the pan-Canadian framework, and a basis on which we can come forward with credibility and continue to show the leadership that Prince Edward Islanders take pride in, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Financial credit for electricity usage

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Premier has mentioned the \$435 million that we spend on energy and fuel, that's money that goes directly out-of-province. But right now New Brunswick receives the benefit for lower carbon emissions when Islanders use less electricity.

Question for the Premier: Under this national climate change agreement, who would receive the financial credit if Prince Edward Island lowers its electricity usage, Prince Edward Island or New Brunswick?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, it is a good question.

In fact, between now and, let me say, the end of January or into the first quarter of the new year, we intend to have that very direct discussion with New Brunswick in partnership as the province with which we have the closest relationship, as we, together as provinces and territories and the federal government, address the commitments of the pan-Canadian framework. We are very alert to the issues regionally both in terms of opportunity and in terms of the commercial relationship that we have with the Province of New Brunswick.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Financial incentive re: local production of renewable energy

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There are many Islanders that are passionate about producing energy locally.

Question for the Premier: Mr. Premier, what financial incentive will there be to increase the amount of renewable energy locally produced on PEI under the deal that you agreed to?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Let's remember that what was agreed to on Friday is a framework. There are many initiatives, many instruments, many relationships, and many funding initiatives that will roll out pursuant to that framework and pursuant to the commitment that we have through to 2030 and 2050 with our partners in Confederation and internationally.

I believe Prince Edward Islanders are very keen to pursue exactly the kind of initiatives that are being suggested here and that's something that we all look forward to working on as we refine the steps. No doubt those are steps that we can look forward to

seeing in greater detail when we have our 2017-2018 budget next spring.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

HST and carbon emissions (further)

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Under the plan agreed to in Ottawa a price of \$50 per ton of carbon emissions will be charged to consumers, farmers, fishers, and businesses by 2022. At our current carbon emission levels that'll be \$90 million a year from Islanders. That's even more money than what the Premier hoped to rake in from egaming.

This Premier is fine with taking an extra \$90 million a year in taxes from Islanders to fight climate change, but yet charges watershed groups for tree seedlings.

Question to the Premier: Mr. Premier, do you still intend to add the HST to home heating fuel as part of your government's energy strategy and climate change strategy?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker let me correct one of the main points that was put forward in the question, and that is, with the first \$10 a ton, which is under the federal benchmark, that would generate, with the scope of the tax anticipated, same as the British Columbia tax, not more than \$10 million annually.

By the time that you get out to the fifth year it's our firm intention, between the price and other measures that will be taken, that Islanders will be consuming less fuel and will thereby see an increase by the fifth year of less than what they'll see in the first year, and that's exactly the plan that we have in mind.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Madam Speaker, I've been hearing from Islanders that they can't

believe that we're not more frustrated here on the opposition side because we're not getting answers to the question, and it's clear to see that that's happening again today.

The Premier flew to Ottawa, Vancouver, and Paris to talk about climate change, but he's still not even giving answers to Islanders right here on PEI. A legislative committee has recommended removing the HST from all sources of home heating to encourage more renewable methods and protect vulnerable Islanders.

Question for the Premier: With the millions and millions in carbon tax revenues you stand to take in from Islanders, do you really need to add the HST to home heating fuel?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, let me repeat one of the answers that I gave to Islanders and that's to request that the members opposite stop talking about \$90 million and trying to scare Islanders about this.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Premier MacLauchlan: Islanders are committed to dealing with climate change, to reducing our carbon footprint, and, Madam Speaker, we are committed to reducing the amount of home heating fuel that all Islanders consume, and to assisting low-income Islanders in particular with reducing their consumption.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's obvious that this government is putting the cart before the horse. They have no plan. I didn't say \$9 million, I said millions and millions, (Indistinct) in my last question I did not say \$9 million.

Islanders can see what's going on here. This government can't wait to get its hands on Islanders' wallets yet once again, and addressing climate change will be taking a backseat to getting the money.

Question to the Premier: Will you commit today that Islanders will not end up paying both a carbon tax and HST on home heating fuel as part of your government's climate change plan?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I will commit today that one of the very first measures that we will take, and that I hope this House will support, will be a program of home retrofits for, in particular, low-income Islanders that will enable them to not only avoid the extra price on carbon, but the total price of carbon.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Carbon tax and vulnerable Islanders

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question will be to the Premier. Premier, you're talking about carbon tax and climate change, but I think you're forgetting something here, Premier, there's something you are forgetting.

When you were in Ottawa making this carbon tax deal, did you think about the most vulnerable people on the Island?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I will be tabling later the actual pan-Canadian framework including the annex that Prince Edward Island submitted which makes specific reference, and with a lot of consideration, to how our work in this area can pay particular attention to the impact on, and the benefits to, low-income Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The carbon tax will be a lot like the HST. It will hurt the most vulnerable Islanders out there. I am not the only one in my district that sees this. We see seniors going with

jerry cans. We see kids going to school hungry. We see that our food banks are up. And this carbon tax, you're taxing on top of tax, Premier.

How do you expect Islanders struggling to get by now to dig deep and find more tax money for you to spend?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I hope that all members of this House will have a particular attention to the very Islanders that are implied by this question, the people who are challenged economically, people who may have homes that could benefit – people who have homes that may benefit from a retrofit, insulation, better windows, other ways in which their homes can be improved, perhaps even conversion away from fuel.

There may be, in particular, work opportunities for Islanders to become part of a growth industry in making our homes more energy-efficient.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Premier, you've got the people on Prince Edward Island to a point they can't afford windmills, they can't afford heat pumps. You've got no job creation. You've got no industry on PEI and you're taxing them again. These people can't afford these carbon taxes.

You brought in the HST, now you're putting carbon taxes on top of that. You (Indistinct) reaching in one pocket, now you're reaching in the second pocket, Premier. People can't afford it!

Don't you see that the same thing will happen on a carbon tax, or do you just not care about the vulnerable people on Prince Edward Island?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, everything that we've said from the time the

pan-Canadian framework has been first discussed has been with a complete priority for how the impact will not fall on those who are vulnerable and where we can find opportunities.

I think that's really the point, is that all of us should be looking for opportunities to come out better, to come out further ahead because of our commitment.

Let me contrast the situation on Prince Edward Island with this \$435 million that we're spending out of the province with some of the western provinces which, in fact, are making money on energy exports. If we can't get ahead on this, it's because we haven't worked hard enough at it, Madam Speaker, and we intend to work at it.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: No, Premier, when the HST came, your government took millions out of the pockets of the most vulnerable Islanders and you put pennies back in. Now that doesn't make much sense. Take millions out and put pennies in for the most vulnerable Islanders out there.

Premier, how do you plan to protect the vulnerable Islanders from this tax that will punish the poor?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, two very important respects.

One, we intend for this to lead to clean growth, which is exactly the title of the framework and two, we will come forward with measures that are designed to ensure that the impact does not fall on the most vulnerable Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This Premier is not getting it. You've got no job growth. You've got no industry coming

to PEI. You've got people hungry now on PEI. You've got seniors going with jerry cans. I've seen it, Premier, and you fellows have seen it in your own districts too. I'm not the only one. Your food banks are up across Prince Edward Island. Kids are going to school hungry, and you're putting another tax on top of a tax. The most vulnerable people can't afford it, Premier.

Premier, how will you make poor Islanders pay more tax money they don't have, reduce poverty in our communities?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I've said, and will be held to this, that we will design these measures to ensure that the impact does not fall on those who are most vulnerable.

But let me say something else. We are seeing growth, and you can see it in the district of the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira. The figures are out today on the lobster fishery, \$42 million extra at the wharf. The farmers, the farm gate, are doing well. Tourism has done well.

We are for prosperity, and that's how Islanders are going to get ahead.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Election finance legislation

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

Last spring the Premier committed to introducing legislation this fall updating our election finance laws to, among other things, set annual donation limits and eliminate contributions from businesses and unions.

A question to the Premier: If government does indeed still intend to make these changes and reforms, when can we expect to see that legislation?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I was reminded after the Leader of the Third

Party asked me last week whoever gets to see me in my office that we, in fact – he and I – had met, as the Leader of the Opposition and I, on November 7th to discuss this.

My plan is, and here you've stolen my thunder, Leader of the Third Party, tomorrow I will have a letter addressed to the leaders of the parties expanding on those discussions and on the statements that I made last spring.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Rural broadband and ISPs

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

As I brought up recently in standing committee, Bell Aliant has donated over \$46,000 to the Liberal Party and over \$24,000 to the Tory party over the last few years.

We've had much discussion recently in this House about a new initiative to improve rural broadband, a process in which various Internet service providers on the Island have a real interest.

Given that Bell Aliant is a major funder to the governing party, how can government remain impartial in this process and treat all ISPs equally?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, a two-part answer to the question.

One, as hon. members will know, we've indicated that we intend for there to be caps on donations, including by corporations. But more fundamentally, our commitment in terms of service to rural Islanders and to all Islanders with Internet service is competition.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Political reform and public funds

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

A simple way for this government to reduce the perception of conflict of interest and improve transparency would be for political parties to stop taking any money at all from businesses, as you yourself promised, Mr. Premier.

A question to the Premier: Will you bring in the political finance reforms you promised before giving out major public funds on projects like rural broadband and the Cornwall bypass?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, the timetable anticipated by the reforms that have been discussed would see them come into effect on January 1st, 2018.

I don't think we would intend to stop government in that 14 months between now and then.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

School evacuation response

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question today is for the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture. In light of the recent emergency evacuation of all Island schools last September as a result of a perceived threat, schools were forced to make a nasty evacuation.

Is your department comfortable that there was a consistent evacuation response to the schools across the province?

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

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

All 62 schools in the Province of Prince Edward Island have plans, school action for emergencies. As the minister who communicated regularly during that day, we're very pleased with the Island-wide

evacuation that did take place, and that safety is always of the utmost importance to all of us here, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My supplementary question is to the same minister: Mr. Minister, can you please advise the House to any changes in evacuation protocol as a result of this evacuation experience in September?

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

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

On September 21st when the bomb threat was received by the national security threats registry in Ottawa we acted quickly in Island schools. The plans that are in place were activated. Very pleased with that day.

Since that day there's been debriefs, we've been meeting with EMO, and we've been looking at ways that we can continue to improve communications with parents, effective student evacuation sites.

Anytime you go through a process and an evacuation with such magnitude that involved 20,000 students there's certainly always ways that we continue to improve and to continue to reassure Islanders and parents and students and staff that safety is the top priority.

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

Guaranteed Income Supplement enhancements

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Family and Human Services. The new Liberal federal government has introduced new enhancements to the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

Would the minister outline what those enhancements would be?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Guaranteed Income Supplement provides financial assistance to low-income seniors who are receiving the Old Age Security. As minister responsible for seniors, I was very intrigued and excited to hear in the 2016 federal budget that, number one, they were restoring the old age and the GIS from 67 to 65. They were also going to be increasing the GIS approximately 10%.

For seniors single receiving the full GIS supplement, they would be receiving approximately \$947 extra per year. That increase happened in July, just this past summer. Approximately 4,200 Island seniors will be receiving that full benefit.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The federal government, when you get to the old age pension, automatically apply that to senior citizens. My understanding is that if you want the supplement or if you are – if the supplement is something that you can access you have to apply three months before your 65th birthday.

I'd like to know: Is the minister doing anything to ensure that senior citizens do take advantage of this supplement?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

That's a great question. Actually, Family and Human Services is very involved and very active in outreach to the senior population. For example, the 2016 Seniors' Guide, we did have information about the GIS supplement, and those guides are handed out to seniors' conferences across the Island.

We also have information that was shared in the PEI Senior Citizens' Federation

conference, as well as the *Voice for Island Seniors*.

Probably the best program or outreach that we have right now is collaboration between my department, the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, and the Canada Revenue Agency. That is an initiative called: Be Aware and Get Your Share.

It's an outreach program where we're going out into the community and making sure that Islanders are receiving the federal and provincial benefits that they are intended to receive.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Would the minister contact the federal government in regards to see that this could become automatic for deserving constituents, just like the old age pension is applied, that it would come automatic, that supplement?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We are always open to partnerships with our federal counterparts. One example of a federal partnership is this tax season we will be partnering with the Canada Revenue Agency to hold volunteer income tax clinics at many of our seniors' homes.

One of the best ways to get the information out there is sitting right here in this room. There are 27 MLAs who are on the ground each and every day and in contact almost each and every day with their constituents. I think that each and every one of us should make it part of our conversation each and every day to everyone – coffee shops; speaking engagements – to make sure that Islanders are aware of the federal and provincial benefits that are out there, and that they are receiving what they are entitled to.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

PISA grade 10 exclusions

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Premier and the co-chair of the Learning Partners Advisory Council: Why are there twice as many grade 10 students excluded from writing the PISA test here as there were excluded in the rest of Canada?

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

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

I just want to reiterate how proud I am of the success of our 15-year-olds in Island schools. I think a reason for all of us to be proud of the successes that our 15-year-olds had on the rigorous PISA assessments that were conducted with over 500,000 students globally in the OECD countries, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is the same government that was cheering for a deficit here two weeks ago.

PEI's exclusion rate is 14.3% and that's double the national average, which was 6.9%.

Question to the Premier and the co-chair of the Learning Partners Advisory Council: Premier, shouldn't PEI's much higher exclusion rate have set off alarm bells somewhere along the way?

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

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

As a department, as the minister, we recognize Prince Edward Island, along with British Columbia and Alberta, were three provinces that saw their exclusion rates rise.

One province, Newfoundland, saw the exclusion rates fall since 2012.

But I do want to add that Prince Edward Island has the highest participation, all students are part of the sample, and all schools participate. There's no other province in Canada that can identify with an all-in approach to the PISA assessments.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I know the minister is looking for a bit of a smoke screen. He's getting beat up pretty bad over this and he's getting pretty touchy about it. I think we've all probably had an opportunity to read his guest opinion in the *Guardian*. We all probably had the same chuckle while we read it.

I've listened to the minister talk highly about Prince Edward Island's inclusive school system and the reason why so many students were excluded.

Question to the minister: How are we a model of inclusion if we excluded so many students from writing the PISA test?

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

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

I, as the minister, am extremely proud of our inclusion practices. I responded to a barrage of questions on the importance of supporting children with unique needs in Island schools on Friday.

I want to reiterate that part of the sample process and once the names refer back to the schools, there are children that all across the world don't participate in PISA, and that's those who would be identified with intellectual or physical disabilities, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's common knowledge amongst the school students, too, who were in that age category. The talk around some of the schools – and I've talked to students that are this age, as you can imagine having one who is this age at home – the talk was that only the smart kids wrote the test.

Question to the minister of education: How do you think that made the rest of the students feel?

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

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

I take exception to the questions from the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters because I have great confidence in the educators and the administrators that provide oversight for the responsibility of this rigorous international assessment, and have great confidence back in 2015 that – I, too, have a 15-year-old that participated in PISA.

Have great confidence in the process and the policies and the guidelines that principals have to provide oversight to make sure that we take the responsibility of the implementation of PISA very seriously.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I hope that the minister of education isn't inferring that the students that I talked to weren't telling me the truth because that's not the case, and if I were to believe one or the other, I'd believe the students. Trust me on that one.

PISA challenge

In October 2014 the minister's department and two school boards at the time rolled out a strategy to prepare for the 2015 PISA test.

Question to the minister: Are you familiar with something called the PISA challenge?

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

Mr. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, am very proud of our 15-year-olds. I must say I was taken back after the announcement when I had nine students who participated in the PISA results, and I must say that I was quite embarrassed by the response from the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters and the Leader of the Third Party in respect to the comments when we had nine 15-year-olds that were extremely excited, who drove down to the Assembly to participate in the announcement.

Will continue to stand firm on our 15-year-olds and the results, and we continue to improve and evaluate how we implement and perform on PISA.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, was really embarrassed that day. While the Leader of the Third Party was trying to respond to you, you rushed for the door to get your picture taken with the students that you dragged down here. You should be embarrassed. There's no one else in this Chamber should be embarrassed but you for the way you acted that day.

This isn't a photo op. These are our children. Do you understand –

Speaker: Do you have a question, hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters?

Mr. Myers: – how important this is?

PISA prep work

Question to the minister: Is the minister familiar with the prep work done by the departments for the PISA test?

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

Mr. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to reassure the Member from Georgetown-St. Peters that there was no photo taken outside of the gallery. I went out

to apologize for some of the language and some of the terminology and the disrespect to that group of nine students who drove down here to hear the announcement.

I want to reiterate –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) announced it.

Mr. Currie: Madam Speaker, I just want to reiterate, over the last 10 years our government has put public education as a top priority.

What we're seeing with the PISA results is a prime example of a rigorous, focused commitment to improving outcomes in learning with stronger collaboration, more targeted gaps in learning, and more focus on precision instruction in this province. We're seeing the results and I'm really proud of the commitment by our teachers and our students in this province.

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

PISA challenge (further)

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The PISA challenge put out by your department to prep students into taking this test talked about scoring. Your department said that the real PISA test answers were either full, partial or no credit. Your department suggested that parents and students should carefully look at the posted solutions to recognize the difference between a full credit, partial credit or no credit.

Question to the minister: Isn't this just another example of government teaching to the test?

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

Mr. Currie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have great confidence. This is an international assessment with rigorous guidelines and expectations that is participated in over 72 countries. I continue to stand firm and take pride in the results and the outcomes and the hard work by educators, and the responsibilities and the

integrity and the credibility of administrators, and the minister of the day as well who provided oversight when PISA was written.

I am extremely confident that this was done with the utmost credibility and integrity, and have full confidence, and will continue to move forward and look at our exclusionary rates and evaluate and continue to respond to our responsibilities with PISA.

Thank you.

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

[A cell phone rang]

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Home and School federation had questions about this approach, too. One director commented that: I am confused. Will just selected students write the test? Selected by whom and how?

Speaker: Hon. member?

Mr. Myers: Yes?

Speaker: Whose phone is ringing?

Mr. Aylward: Madam Speaker, I apologize, it's my phone, I'm having technical problems with it and (Indistinct).

Speaker: Okay. Maybe, hon. member, you could leave it outside the Chamber so that it doesn't disturb.

Mr. Aylward: I will do that.

Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Thank you.

The director from the Home and School federation said: I am confused. Will just selected students write the test? Selected by whom and how? And will they be prepped for the test? Is the Eastern Language School Board not attempting to skew the results favorably?

Question to the minister: Isn't that exactly what happened?

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

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

I have great confidence in the administrators that follow the protocol. There are exclusionary practices. There are codes that identify students who do not participate.

I also want to share that Kathryn O'Grady, who's the lead person with the responsibility for PISA in Canada, says this about Prince Edward Island:

PISA 2015 results are recognized as valid and reliable by the PISA consortium. Prince Edward Island has showed significant improvement compared to previous PISA administrations. Three provinces were identified as not meeting the school response rates. PEI has a rigorous process in place to investigate potential bias and this was conducted for these provinces. Prince Edward Island is not one of these provinces.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a concern that I've heard a lot from teachers and one that I share. I think now we might be getting to the issue of why the minister has been so touchy and continues to be touchy today about this. They wanted better scores, they had a plan to get better scores, and they would do it by any means necessary, excluding students, teaching to the test, and all those things.

PISA results

Question to the minister: What's more bothersome, that the PISA results didn't become a good news story or that the PISA results exposed a bunch of problems about how this government runs its school system?

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

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

This government and government's that I've been part of – and this, I must say, is my second go-around as the minister of education. After a 20-year career in the public education system – and I'm extremely proud of the commitment. Back in 2000 when I was an educator in the system I remember the first participation with PISA. It was not a good day for education in the province. Since then, there's been a tremendous focus, a tremendous commitment, and hard work by all Island educators, and students and families, to continue to raise the bar on the quality of public education, and this is a direct reflection of that, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The government twitter accounts have been on overdrive chirping the party line. You had softball questions by your backbenchers last week, you even penned your own op-ed for the *Guardian*.

Question to the minister of education: When did a better headline for government become more important than student achievement in this province?

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

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

I'll tell you what's really important. It's really important that all Members of the Legislative Assembly and this public realize that anyone who would make an assumption or assume that there was – and challenge the credibility and the integrity of the process and the educators that had that responsibility back in 2015, I take great exception to that.

I take great exception to the fact that we're not standing tall as legislators and as an Island and celebrating success after a long time of focused, committed hard work by all

educators and students of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

I continue to stand firm and tall on the results and very proud as we continue to move and improve the quality of public education in this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, last week I joined Canada's First Ministers for the culmination of discussions on Canada's role in fighting climate change and carbon pollution.

The result of our discussions, the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, represents an historic step in Canada's transition to clean energy and a resilient economy.

Prince Edward Island joins 11 provinces and territories representing over 90% of the Canadian population in this framework and in the collective effort that it initiates.

In Prince Edward Island, Canada, and around the world, the impacts of climate change are well evident. On PEI, we are witnessing greater weather events that have a direct impact on us, economically and practically.

We see coastal erosion, like that portrayed on Lennox Island on the CBC last week or at West Point. Storm surges are providing challenges to our ports and coastal areas that can affect critical infrastructure and the livelihood in key sectors such as fisheries, tourism, and agriculture. Recently, we had the power outage in eastern Prince Edward Island.

It is estimated that by 2050 the costs to Canada will be between \$20 billion and \$40 billion per year if we do nothing about climate change. Business sectors and markets are increasingly considering climate risks. Acting on climate change will reduce

risks and create new economic opportunities and good jobs.

Doing nothing is not an option. In fact, Prince Edward Island has always been a leading actor in addressing climate, driving renewable energy, and building a smart economy. Our wind regime is world-class. Our biomass initiatives have been innovative, building energy but reducing waste. Islanders have transitioned in large numbers to heating their homes with electricity.

Together, we can tackle climate change, develop new ideas and methods for clean growth, and provide opportunities for businesses and jobs in what is currently a \$5.8 trillion global market that is expected to grow to \$9 trillion by 2030.

Each year, PEI spends \$435 million buying energy from off-Island sources. Through better efficiency and the development of more local sources of energy, we will work to keep more funds on Prince Edward Island for Islanders and for our economy.

And we have seen companies on Prince Edward Island get ahead because of smart investments and innovations and developments in clean growth, for example: Cavendish Farms in New Annan has cut their carbon emissions almost in half through 2004 by transitioning to biofuels and natural gas; Aspin Kemp & Associates in Pooles Corner is developing and exporting clean technology worldwide; Frontier Power Systems in Brudenell is focused on providing engineering services for utility wind and wind-diesel technologies, including in Canada's north.

Our approach to clean growth and climate change, including pricing carbon pollution, will be a made-in-PEI and made-for-PEI solution. With a coordinated energy strategy and climate action plan, we will, among other things: gradually move away from reliance on fossil fuels to more electricity in our homes and, eventually, in our vehicles; build more renewable energy sources, including increasing our wind capacity by 35% by 2025; support programs to allow Islanders to make their homes more energy-efficient; make no change to our HST policy on home heating oil; adopt the National Building Code; collaborate with New

Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the federal government on transportation innovation for our region.

The framework includes a national commitment on pricing carbon pollution. Prince Edward Island will do its part in this, as well. Our approach will be fiscally neutral, with tax returns to Islanders, investments in efficiency support, especially for low-income households, and improved clean infrastructure. To be introduced in January 2018, the carbon price will not extend to agriculture and fisheries.

Our government looks forward to working together with Islanders and Island business that can grow our economy, create good jobs, and take action on climate change.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to respond to this statement. I hear a lot of great items in this statement, and it would have been nice if the Premier could have actually brought some of those up during Question Period. I think he maybe was sort of saving some of them for the official announcement.

But the main thing, first of all, is I'm glad to see that this government does recognize that climate change is a big issue and needs to be dealt with. We've all seen the effects of erosion, coastal erosion, and (Indistinct) mention the power outages that can occur from it in these catastrophic weather events, so that's the first thing.

The next thing is I'm really glad to hear that the government is going to encourage local generation of power, electricity, especially solar and wind turbines are the two that come to mind. That is so important to stopping the export of our money in order to import fuel as well as electricity.

But the flipside of that is when we're talking about the greenhouse gas emissions and reducing those and getting credit for those. We have to make sure that, in fact, it's not

some other province that gets credit for when we reduce our electricity consumption, or we stop buying from off-Island and produce our own electricity, and right now that is a concern because it does seem that they put the cart before the horse and signed onto a framework where Prince Edward Island might not be getting the full recognition they deserve for the strides we make in actually creating our own energy locally, which would be so good for the economy.

The second thing is we have to really be careful that we don't impact low-income Islanders. They are the ones most vulnerable to new taxes because they have the least amount of money, and I didn't hear a lot of that in the announcement. I'll have to take a look at that again, but that does concern me. It was great to hear that there's going to be special attention paid – and I'm sure the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries had a good hand in this – any sort of carbon pricing will not be applied to agriculture and fishery industries and they will be excluded. So that is fantastic news.

There was one statement that maybe I could ask the Premier for a clarification on this. I believe he said they're going to make no change to the policy on tax on heating oil. I just wanted to clarify if it was no change or that there was a change. It went very quickly, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. member, it's not Question Period, so you could – that would be a great question for tomorrow in Question Period.

Thank you.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. LaVie: Just nod your head, yes or no.

Speaker: Okay, I'll allow it.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Clarification, Premier, to his question? Do you want him to repeat it?

Could you repeat the question?

Mr. Trivers: There was one statement you made, and I wasn't sure if you said make no

change to HST on heating oil or that you said you were going to change the way that heating oil was taxed.

Speaker: Clarification, Premier?

Premier MacLauchlan: He heard me correctly.

Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

That is very interesting. It's great, because this is one of the questions we had during Question Period. It would have been nice to actually get that answer during Question Period, but I guess the Premier was saving this for the statement. But it's fantastic to hear that there won't be any change to HST on heating oil, especially for low-income Islanders where that's a huge source.

But more importantly is we need to remove the HST from renewable energy sources like electricity. We have to remove it from all home heating sources, Madam Speaker, and that's absolutely key.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Your time is up.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I decided to get involved in politics because I was concerned about what the future held for my children, and everybody else's children in this House, and perhaps paramount in that concern was the issue of climate change.

It's gratifying, finally, for governments to recognize that this is an issue that we have to move on and we have to move on quickly. I wish we had been doing so 20 years ago, but I'm just grateful and thankful and relieved that, finally, we are. The ball has dropped and we're doing what has to be done.

I want to thank our Premier for being there in Ottawa, and I watched intently the press conference that arrived two hours late. I guess that's an indication of how intense all of the negotiations were prior to that. I think all Canadians need to be celebrating the fact that we have a pan-Canadian agreement here.

In terms of the details of the Premier's statement, I think it's important that Islanders recognize that pricing carbon, pricing pollution, if it's done properly, is not a tax grab. It's not. It can be done in such a way that influences behaviour, because that's what the market can do when a tax is properly applied. It can encourage people to do the right thing and discourage them from doing the wrong thing, and it does not have to be in any way a tax grab. However, it has to be put in place properly and there have to be safeguards for low-income Islanders, and I echo the concerns of my fellow member across the hall here.

In terms of conservation and introducing the National Building Code, how lovely to hear that. We've been waiting since 1994 to have the National Building Code in place in Prince Edward Island, 22 years. If it took climate change in order to get that to happen, then great, and I'm so glad that that's coming. That will make a significant difference going forward.

But the housing stock that we do have here on the Island needs to be updated, and this job-creating, energy-conserving idea of the Premier of going out and retrofitting houses is incredibly important.

There's so many things to like about this, and I realize my time is coming to an end, Madam Speaker, but finally there is hope for our children, and for that I am very grateful.

There's lots to talk about here, but I'm just very grateful.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Crime Prevention and Policing Service Model Review

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, if I may, by way of recognition, and rising, recognize Fred Osborne, formerly chair of the English Language School Board, Bill McKinnon, CUPE, involved with the policing services announcement that I'm about to make, and others in the gallery.

I expect others may join in an announcement in a media conference shortly.

In February, our government announced the first review of Prince Edward Island's police services in 40 years.

Through this process we heard from nearly 200 police partners and directly from Islanders. We heard that Islanders are proud of our law enforcement teams and share our appreciation of the important work that they carry out each day to protect Islanders and our communities.

This afternoon, I will have the pleasure of releasing the Crime Prevention and Police Service Model Review and government's response to this work.

The review showed us that while Prince Edward Islanders are fortunate to enjoy a low crime rate there are a number of challenges we need to address to better support police throughout the province.

To achieve this we will be bringing forward a new common set of standards that will provide an integrated approach to community safety.

Ten recommendations from the review will be implemented over the next 12-18 months. These recommendations will lead to better crime control, more strategic and intelligence-led policing, and more cohesive partnerships in crime prevention.

Prince Edward Island is policed by the RCMP "L" Division and three municipal police departments in Charlottetown, Summerside, and Kensington. Additionally, there are security police officers at UPEI, and enforcement services that are provided by conservation officers attached to provincial government departments.

Each of our police forces provides valuable services to our community. We will work

with each of them to meet this new common set of standards.

The existing police model will remain in place and will be strengthened through a coordinated approach that provides all Islanders with an equitable level of service.

One of the recommendations in the report is around communications. We will work with all forces so they are able to communicate directly with each other, as well as with other first responders such as the Island fire services and Island EMS.

Another example of where all policing agencies can strengthen their partnerships is in major crime, including homicide and organized crime. We will work with our partners to create specialized police service teams in areas in: major case management; forensic identification services; collision reconstruction; police dog services; and emergency response.

This approach will better support police throughout the province in their important role in preventing crime, keeping our communities safe, and protecting those most vulnerable in society.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I attended today's technical briefing on this review. I believe it will help to set the stage as we move forward towards a new police service model within our province. It's something that I'm very interested in and have been following along very closely.

I believe that through collaboration and input from all stakeholders we will be able to ensure Prince Edward Islanders that we will have the police presence that's able to respond to the growing demands of our police service into the 21st century, keeping in mind all aspects of law enforcement while being sensitive to the changes we are experiencing in policing and the province.

I also want to take this opportunity to offer a thank you to all our officers and support staff at every level of policing for each day they do the best to provide safety and security to our Island communities and all Islanders through a continued support for policing.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I was unaware until the Premier's statement that it has been 40 years since we did a police review. It seems an extraordinarily long period of time between reviews.

I'm relieved to hear that there are not going to be any major changes here. I understand, absolutely, the need for better communications between the various law enforcement agencies that are here on the Island. I'm glad to hear that that's going to be part of the review.

What we, of course, need to continue is an effective and efficient delivery of services to all Islanders because the police have so many new challenges here. We have drug issues. We have biker gangs coming into our communities. We have organized crime at a level we have never seen before. The police are faced with all sorts of new and very dangerous and worrisome problems to deal with.

I also would like to just give a little heads up. A little shout-out to the community policing initiatives, like Tim Keizer, who is working in Colonel Gray developing collaborative and friendly initiatives with the community. That sort of trust and level of respect that has to be fostered between the police agencies and other Islanders is such an important part of building a safe and strong community.

This is a nice announcement and I thank you for it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Combating Impaired Driving with Amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*

Ms. Biggar: Madam Speaker, on Prince Edward Island the crime of impaired driving remains a painful social issue, one that results in tragic injuries and death on our province's roads each year.

While our police forces and my department's highway safety division are tirelessly working to combat impaired driving, more work needs to be done.

Later today I expect to begin second reading of two pieces of legislation that will strengthen our ability to discourage impaired driving and punish those who choose to drive while impaired by drugs or alcohol.

We have some guests in the House today, who have been constant partners and encouragers for the Province of Prince Edward Island as we take on these challenges.

Members of MADD who are with us today in the gallery are Karen Peters, Joanne McInnis, and Russ Stewart. MADD has been the best kind of partner in this cause, and I thank them for their collaboration. They give government credit when credit is due, but they never hesitate to encourage the province to adopt stronger, more effective measures in combating impaired driving.

My department wishes to reemphasize our government's commitment to a road safety strategy we have called The Road to Zero, a strategy that aims for zero collisions, zero collisions with injuries, zero impaired drivers, zero fatalities.

With the amendments under consideration today, we propose to add a vehicle impoundment authority for short-term roadside driver licence suspensions, and 30-day vehicle impoundments for first and second offences to strengthen the ability of our police forces to enforce these regulations.

We will increase the minimum mandatory ignition interlock term for those convicted of a second impaired driving offence. We will

amend the zero blood level tolerance so that no blood alcohol will be tolerated in drivers younger than 22 years of age and allow short-term roadside driver licence suspension to be added to a drivers' abstract.

Our province is a national leader in the fight against impaired driving, and with partners like MADD Canada we will continue to adapt and upgrade our legislation to combat this problem.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I support the minister in this. Impaired driving is a serious matter on the Island roads and it affects each one of us. The tragedies that occur because of impaired driving and the things that they cause are devastating to families.

I think any measure we can put in place to help deter impaired driving and reduce the amount that are caught by our Island police departments is very important, and I support that.

I spent some time talking to members of highway safety on the proposed changes. I think they're good changes. I think, at the end of the day, we're trying to make our Island roads as safe as possible with a matter that, like I say, can cause grave consequences to a lot of families.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I imagine I am like many people in this House, where I have come across the scene of a serious motor vehicle accident and how tragic that can be.

Driving is difficult enough, particularly this time of year, on Prince Edward Island, across Canada, that you need absolutely all of our faculties about you all the time. I'm constantly, when I'm driving in the wintertime, reminding myself of how careful I have to be.

When we lose those faculties through drinking you become a danger not only to yourself, but to every single other person on the road, and that lack of responsibility is something we cannot tolerate.

I really appreciate the grand vision, minister, that you have, the zero vision going forward, because you have to keep these long-term goals in mind. I welcome this statement and I support you absolutely in all you're doing.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests (II)

Speaker: Hon. members, before we move on, I'm going to give way to the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale for recognition.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, would like to recognize Russ Stewart who was a former RCMP officer and is very passionate and he gives back to his community in a lot of ways. He's a great community man and it's great to see that he's giving back with the organization MADD.

Thank you, Russ.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I present herewith a Message from His Honour the Lieutenant

Governor which said message is signed by His Honour.

Speaker: Hon. members, I'm going to ask the Clerk to read the message from His Honour and I'm going to ask you to stand while the message is being read.

Clerk: Dear Madam Speaker:

His Honour, the Honourable H. Frank Lewis, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Prince Edward Island, hereby transmits the Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure of the Province of Prince Edward Island in Support of the Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2016 that were required to carry out the public services of the Province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, the Prince Edward Island Terms of Union, 1873, and the *Financial Administration Act*, His Honour recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Commended by
Paul Ledwell, Clerk of the Executive Council and
Secretary to Cabinet

Also signed by
His Honour the Honourable H. Frank Lewis
Lieutenant Governor

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Madam Speaker, by Command of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I present herewith the Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Province of Prince Edward Island in support of the *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2016* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that consideration of the Supplementary Estimates in Committee of the Whole House be added to

the orders of the day until such time as they are dispatched.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table responses to written questions Nos. 1,063 and 1,064 by the Member from Morell-Mermaid and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change: Canada's Plan to Address Climate Change and Grow the Economy and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table two documents relating to the Crime Prevention and Policing Services Model Review dated June 2016 and December 2016 and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Alberton-Roseville, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table written questions to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism and I expect an answer on my way home this evening and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Belfast-Murray River, that the said

document be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

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

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee and I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. J. Brown: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, that the report of the committee be adopted.

Your committee is reporting on its work since last reporting to the Legislative Assembly in May of 2016. I would like to provide a brief overview of the committee's work during the past few months.

Your committee met four times this fall and held meetings on various topics relating to the committee's mandate.

Your committee considered the topic of drug use in the province and met with representatives from the PEI Division of the RCMP and the PEI Association of Chiefs of Police.

Your committee further considered Motion No. 60 of the 1st Session of the 65th General Assembly, support for grandparents acting as primary caregivers, and met with the following groups on this topic; the PEI Federation of Foster Families, the Community Legal Information Association, and the PEI Senior Citizens' Federation of Prince Edward Island.

As a result of its deliberations, your committee is pleased to recommend the following to the Members of the Legislative Assembly:

On the topic of drug use in the province:

1. That the Department of Justice and Public Safety consider introducing "Safety Communities and Neighbourhoods" – SCAN – legislation.

2. That the Department of Justice and Public Safety be encouraged to engage with stakeholders to provide any needed support to implement the "Healthy Me" program in all elementary, junior high and senior high schools in all areas of the province, including the Charlottetown City Police, the Prince Edward Island Association of Chiefs of Police and other municipal policing services in the province.

This is a good example of the police departments working together or an area where they could. This is a program that was developed by the Charlottetown City Police, in particular Officer Keizer, who is the community policing officer with the Charlottetown City Police and was instrumental in developing that program and implementing it through Charlottetown area high schools.

3. That the Department of Justice and Public Safety engage with the RCMP and other law enforcement agencies in support of enforcement and prevention regarding outlaw motorcycle gangs in the province.

4. That the Department of Justice and Public Safety engage with the appropriate stakeholders regarding access to existing technology to aid police enforcement in the province.

5. That the Department of Justice and Public Safety engage with the appropriate stakeholders regarding the expanded use of electronic monitoring.

On the topic of Motion No. 60, Support for grandparents acting as primary caregivers:

6. That the relevant departments within government collaborate to improve and simplify the current system of practical and financial supports to grandparents who are acting as primary care-givers to their grandchildren.

To conclude, on the topic of Motion No. 60, the 1st Session of the 65th General Assembly, with the receipt and adoption of this report your committee has concluded its work.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness your committee thanks all those individuals and organizations that met with it to provide information, advice, and advocacy in matters of importance to the health and wellness of the residents of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I'd like to thank the Chair for delivery of our report. I feel very strongly that this committee is a very important committee here on Prince Edward Island as we are tasked with many issues that affect all Islanders, one way or the other.

Although we did meet several times, I think a total of five, we did receive some very informative briefings, particularly from the grandparents as caregivers, and also from the varying police services that brought us up to speed on the issues on the streets with regards to illegal drugs, and various other issues that are ongoing and have been publicized as of late with regards to the outlaw motorcycle gang, the Hells Angels, moving into the city of Charlottetown.

There are several other issues that unfortunately were not completed by our committee.

I had brought up many issues to the committee with regards to things that I thought were important to Islanders, one of which was long-term care facilities. I brought it up to committee and the committee voted and decided it would be best to have a briefing on the long-term priorities and policies regulating licensing, and that the minister responsible would come in and give us a briefing. Now, I do admit that was originally scheduled but the minister then was no longer available and, unfortunately, there was no date rescheduled for that.

I also brought up an issue around facilitated communication. Again, the committee decided rather than bring in witnesses or to hear from the minister in person we would

write to two departments. Now, we did hear from the Minister of Family and Human Services with regards to facilitated communication, but we're still waiting to hear from the Minister of Health and Wellness.

We also had sent a request, although I would have preferred to have seen, again, witnesses come in, and that had to do with wait time for surgeries. The committee then did decide that they would send a letter to the CEO of Health PEI, Dr. Michael Mayne, requesting information for wait time from a referral family doctor to a specialist and wait time for a meeting with a specialist to surgery for all surgical specialties. There was no correspondence received from the CEO of Health PEI.

Also, there was a request on behalf of myself to the committee to get an update from Dr. Rhonda Matters who was, at that time, the chief medical officer responsible for mental health and addictions here in PEI. Subsequent to that there was a press event held and the strategy was released, but I am still waiting to actually see the report that was prepared by Dr. Rhonda Matters.

Finally, I had also requested an update on the methadone maintenance treatment program and, once again, the committee decided rather than having a witness come in that we would send a letter to Dr. Michael Mayne, chief executive officer of Health PEI, and unfortunately nothing has been received to date.

I just wanted to bring those issues forward because, as I said in my opening comments, I believe that the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness is an extremely important committee here in Prince Edward Island. I know that every member that sits around that table including the Chair is committed to moving issues forward and to solving problems so that we have better health for all Islanders.

But when a committee writes to a minister or in this case, quite often, the CEO of Health PEI, I feel that it is inexcusable that the committee at the very least doesn't receive an explanation of why the information is not forthcoming. I wanted to stress that similar to Public Accounts there seems to be a trend that even though these

committees are requesting information it's not forthcoming.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just wanted to comment about how important it is, the work that is done on the health and wellness committee, and I wanted to highlight some specific areas that are important to the people that I represent in District 18 Rustico-Emerald, and I believe to Islanders as a whole.

In the report it talked about grandparents acting as primary caregivers. There's a number of grandparents in District 18 that are in that situation, and not just grandparents, but it's maybe relatives of the children, and it may be even third parties that are taking the children in and looking after them, but perhaps not able to qualify for any supports that would normally be available in the case of foster care. I do understand that it is a complex issue and I do hope that the Minister of Family and Human Services makes some progress on that file very soon.

The next thing I wanted to bring up is how procurement happens at Health PEI. In particular, I would like to see the committee review the protein tender and not – really, in how it's constructed and what suppliers are requested as first choices on that protein tender.

Some other issues I would like to see at the health and wellness committee – I would like to see the health and wellness committee review the complaints process that exists within Health PEI across the board. I think, based on some recent research that I have done, the complaints process isn't always clear. It is many times governed by medical bylaws and people aren't necessarily familiar with how that is supposed to work, who they're supposed to contact, the (Indistinct) should be in writing, but then there are feedback forms online. I just think the complaints process needs to be looked at. Maybe I shouldn't use the term "complaints." It's really a feedback process so that Health PEI can continue to improve.

One thing I hear almost all the time from people who have worked for years and years in health and wellness, in the system, and from people who are using the system, is that it is huge, it's complex, and that it is very hard to understand. I find in some cases it's the same for Family and Human Services. Any way we can get feedback to improve that and help people understand how the system works I think it's extremely important, and I would like to see the committee look at that.

Another thing I would like to really see the committee look at and possibly call witnesses on is really compensation for doctors, and specifically salaried versus fee-for-service doctors. This is something that has been brought up to me by a number of people, including physicians working in the system, and I really think we need to get to the bottom of that. I think it could help with increasing the number of Islanders that have a family doctor, and as well potentially even save the province money.

Another thing I wanted to bring up that we have heard before for health and wellness committee is wait times for specialists. I know it's something that the Minister of Health and Wellness has looked at before and we've heard questions in the House, but again, it's something that I really think witnesses need to come in to get to the bottom of this because it is such a complex process. I think as legislators and representatives we really need to find out at committee the details and get into the weeds, as they say, to find out what's going on.

Another topic I wanted to bring up is wait times within the emergency department. This is something that is brought up time and time again to me by my constituents, and I think that the vast majority of people aren't unreasonable and are willing to wait. The problems occur when there's a lack of communication within the emergency department and I think there have been some strides to fix this. I know that the doctor in charge said it's like turning a giant ship. You have to start slowly and it takes a long time to turn. But I would like to see the committee really look into that and see if there's anything that can be done even short term. One of the suggestions that was brought to me and that I worked with the head of the department and the CEO on, and

as well as our health critic here, the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, was: What can we do to help make the wait time in the emergency department better for people who are waiting?

If you are there for eight hours maybe you need to be offered a blanket. Maybe you need to be directed to where you can get food, these sorts of things. Maybe you need to be updated on a regular basis what your status is in the queue.

My final point here I wanted to bring up in addressing this report is there is a huge number of issues within health and wellness. It's a giant area. When you take the Department of Family and Human Services and you combine it with the Department of Health and Wellness, we're looking at \$650 million in the budget –

An Hon. Member: That's just health.

Mr. Trivers: That's just health? So it is well over \$700 million. It by far makes up the bulk of our provincial budget. To have one committee that is trying to address all of these concerns – you can see today I brought up probably six concerns that are big topics that the committee may not even have time to get to. Meanwhile I think we heard the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock talk about how there are other issues the committee already has on their list and they are not going to be able to get to see or haven't been able to get there because of the time in waiting for responses and these sorts of things.

I would seriously like to suggest that this Legislature look at splitting health and wellness maybe into two committees to see if that would allow the committees to get more work done in this huge and vastly important area within our province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale.

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Education and Economic

Development, I beg leave to introduce the report of the said committee and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, that the same be now received and do lie on the Table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Dumville: Madam Speaker, I move seconded by the Honourable Member from Evangeline-Miscouche that the report of the Committee adopted.

This report is an account of committee activities since last reporting to the Assembly. The report includes the following recommendations:

1. Your committee requests that government and other stakeholders evaluate what can be done in the immediate term to improve high-speed Internet access for Islanders and support the Island economy.

2. Your committee recommends that government work with the Island's post-secondary institutions, student representatives, and employers in the following areas:

A) Making forms of student assistance more effective for the students who need it the most.

B) Examining the potential for an Open Educational Resource project here in PEI, similar to the Open Textbook Project in British Columbia.

C) Working to create more paid co-op and intern opportunities that will enable students to better integrate to the workforce upon graduation.

3. Your committee calls on the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture to explain why the number of preexisting licensed child care facilities and the number of vacancies in the geographical area are factors in determining whether to issue a license to any new child care facilities.

4. Your committee recommends that Transport Canada and Northumberland Ferries Limited work with government and local stakeholders to create a taskforce to examine long-term sustainable solutions for

the Wood Islands-Caribou ferry service, as per Motion 69.

Your committee thanks the Committee Clerk, Ryan Reddin, in preparing this report, and individuals and groups that shared their views with the committee.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, sit on this committee, and the committee has quite a full agenda, and we've been meeting quite a bit to talk about a number of issues.

I know I'd first like to commend the Member from Belfast-Murray River who pushed forward the idea of having hearings about the ferry. The committee was able to go down to Wood Islands to hear right from the people the effect of having the ferry out of service, or only having one ferry running for that period of time. I think it was a great piece of work, and it's something that as a committee and as the Legislature we need to keep our pressure on, because we don't want it to happen again. We want to make sure that government is very responsive to the needs of the people who live in that area.

The matter of the Bell high-speed Internet, we've heard from numerous people on the Island who don't have adequate high-speed Internet, and that's kind of what kicked that off. I know that we had asked the minister for a copy of the Bell contract, and there was a whole bunch of, kind of, things happen behind the scenes where we were told no, we couldn't have it. Then the Chair of the committee was able to call the minister one night and the minister was able to send an email to Bell, and 40 minutes later Bell had returned with a completely redacted contract. In 40 minutes they redacted this humongous –

An Hon. Member: Twenty-one.

Mr. Myers: It was 21, sorry, it was 21 minutes. They were able to fully redact a contract. Raised a lot of questions, a lot more questions probably than there were answers on that.

I know the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, he signed the contract, or he was one of the original signatures –

Mr. R. Brown: That didn't get redacted?

Mr. Myers: I know that the committee has agreed to put him in front of committee.

An Hon. Member: You in on that?

Mr. Myers: He's one of the witnesses that has been called to talk about the Bell contract. The Minister of Finance is also – his name is on there. He signed a contract with Bell. He's a witness to committee that we've called forward. We've also called Allan Campbell who signed the contract prior to either of those two names on it to bring in front of committee to talk about the ideas, and to date I think the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism is the only one to date who's actually made any effort to actually agree –

Mr. LaVie: Oh, and a good man (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: – to the request from committee to come in.

One of the things that I'll tell you, when Ronnie MacKinley was elected in this House and when Ronnie MacKinley had an opportunity to come to committee, he always took it. If you're a good, strong politician and you believe that every day you represent the people and you do what's best for them, you'll have no problem coming to a committee of your peers and explain to us what you were trying to accomplish at the time you signed your name to it.

It's not a dangerous committee at all. I know the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, he can handle himself quite well. You should come. I look forward to having you there. It won't be quite as adventurous as the days when Ronnie MacKinley would come.

But either way, there's still a lot of work for this committee to do when it comes to the Bell contract. There's pressure that I think the ferry stuff has been pushed off to the taskforce committee now, which is great. It's going to have kind of a push of its own.

We still have key issues in education that we're trying to deal with.

I look forward to the coming months in that committee. We have a lot of work to do, but hopefully we'll have even more to report back to the House in the spring.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just wanted to comment on the report, just saying I was fortunate to be able to go in and present to the committee, specifically talking about an off-Island self employment income tax credit that I may propose as a private member's bill, hopefully in the spring.

I wanted to thank the committee for their consideration of the out-of-province self-employment tax credit. I really appreciated all the feedback that came there and made some significant improvements to the bill, and I also was very encouraged by the support from the committee in terms of where they really felt it was a great idea and would be something that could help fill a gap in our economic development plan here in the province.

I look forward to the House seeing this bill at some point in the future, and I look forward to perhaps those members who were there who I presented to talking to the other members of this House and filling them in, and perhaps helping me garner their support so that this private member's bill can pass in the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2016* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of

Workforce and Advanced Learning, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2016*, Bill No. 60, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance, would you care to give a brief explanation?

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The schedule attached to this act lists the total amount of special warrants approved under the authority of the *Financial Administration Act* since the last sitting of this House.

Speaker: Thank you.

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Can I do introductions for a second?

Speaker: Absolutely.

Mr. McIsaac: I want to recognize Russ Stewart, a friend of mine, and across the hall, Fred Osborne, who's the past-president of Maritime Christian College and left that, did a great job for the years he was president of the – or chair of the English Language School Board, and now he's a councillor in Alexandra. So I'm sure he's here to watch what the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment is doing with his *Municipal Government Act*, so the eyes are on (Indistinct) for sure.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy that the 21st order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 21, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 50, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll now call on the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot to chair the Committee of the Whole House, but before we do that. I'm going to give way to the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira for recognition.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to recognize two ladies in the gallery, it's Joanne McInnis and, of course, my Aunt Karen. They're here representing MADD Canada. I want to thank them for all the work they do for all of Prince Edward Island. Thank you very much, and welcome to the Legislature.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot to chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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 Highway Traffic Act (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

Mr. MacKay: Just an overview, Chair.

Ms. Biggar: Sure, a couple of things. First of all, hon. members, permission to take

Graham Miner from highway safety division on the floor.

Mr. MacKay: Granted.

Ms. Biggar: This is a slight amendment, and I'll tell you the reason for the amendment. If you recall when we did Bill No. 49, we changed the title of that from Bill No. 49 to *Hannah's Bill*.

What that has done is, this bill, if you look at it, it says the title is Bill No. 50 (No. 2). I'm moving an amendment that will take out the ("No. 2)". I move an amendment to that bill.

The title of Bill No. 50 is amended by the deletion of the words "(No. 2)".

Leader of the Opposition: Do you need a seconder?

Ms. Biggar: No.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, members.

Just an overview on what is actually in the bill. It's a combination of a number of things. I have some briefing notes here I'll just read through, and then if you have any questions.

In 1, under bicycle, the definition of a bicycle, it replaces the definition of a bicycle to clarify that bicycles are devices with only two wheel, any prescribed device, and to exclude devices that can be operated by a motor.

We have consulted with Cycling PEI and PEI chiefs of police association on this and this is a practice that is in other provinces. A similar definition is in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Ontario and BC.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) question.

Ms. Biggar: Could I just read through the whole thing, there's a number, and we can certainly –

Mr. Trivers: Yeah, I don't know – we're not going through clause by clause.

Ms. Biggar: It's my understand from the other hon. members that they wanted an overview.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, continue.

Ms. Biggar: Under engine brake prohibitions. That adds a prohibition on using engine brakes on portions of highways for which the speed limit is 60 kilometres per hour or less. Or contrary to official traffic signs that restrict or prohibit their use at specific times of day.

Hon. members, this is something I, myself, initiated in response to concerns from the public regarding noise of engine brakes. This is practiced similar to Nova Scotia. We consulted on this with the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association, PEI Truckers Association, and the PEI chiefs of police.

I missed 2. Sorry, hon. members, that's the increased mandatory ignition term for a second-time offender. It amends the act to increase the minimum mandatory ignition interlock term for those convicted of a second impaired driving offence from two years to three years. That change will only affect those convicted after the change takes place.

I want to thank MADD PEI and MADD Canada for their consultation, and the PEI chiefs of police for their support, as well.

This is also practiced in Alberta, BC, Manitoba and Ontario.

Then, we go to 4. There are housekeeping parts of that. It amends the regulatory making authority under section 148(2) of the act. That is applicable to commercial vehicles with the respect to the adoption of reference of a code or a standard to also include an adoption by reference of regulations made by another government.

This amended section will now allow the minister to consider the adoption in whole, or in part, any regulation made by the federal government aimed at improving commercial vehicle safety on our highways. Again, that was just for clarity.

5 is a housekeeping item for clarity, section 149 of the act, to add a minimum penalty for failure to obey any provision of the act or

regulations respecting commercial motor vehicles. The previous iteration included a maximum penalty and no minimum penalty for any contravention of the act or regulations involving the commercial vehicle.

The amended version with the minimum penalty will give enforcement personnel additional options to provide oversight to commercial motor carriers, therefore improving road safety. Again, that was just an update.

We have another housekeeping item, 6, amending section 194(1) of the *Highway Traffic Act*, by addition of the words "and regulations" after the words "in this section".

7 is another housekeeping item and it amends section 277.1(3.2)(b) of the act respecting roadside suspensions. To clarify, when breath samples results obtained under clause 277.1(1)(a) of the act are relevant. When the rest of subsection 277.1(1) of the act is relevant to the suspensions. That, again, is a housekeeping item.

8 corrects a cross-referencing error in subsection 277.3(2) of the act.

9 is to increase the zero alcohol level blood count for under 19 of age drivers to raise it to 22 years of age.

I want to make sure that you understand, in this one, this is not retroactive for those who are presently 19. It will be any new drivers coming in. The revision provision will not affect persons who are 19 years of age or older when it comes into effect or persons who are under 19 years of age and the holders of drivers licences when it comes into effect, once they obtain the age of 19. That was an initiative of MADD PEI, MADD Canada and PEI highway safety division. We consulted with MADD Canada, as well as the PEI chiefs of police.

Two more amendments, when you have some – three more actually, in this bill. 10 amends section 301 of this act to replace the words "herein" within this act or the regulations. That's just a word change.

11, again, is in regard to regulations respecting bicycles. Regulation making

authority will allow the department to modernize all rules respecting the usage, equipment, and interaction of bicycles with other vehicles on our island roadways.

For that we consulted with Cycling PEI, who brought forward the initiative, as well as our own highway safety division. We also consulted with the PEI Chiefs of Police.

The last one members, allows for additional alcohol related driving offenses to be added to a drivers abstract. Again, we consulted and it was an initiative of MADD PEI, MADD Canada and we have support of them as well as our PEI chiefs of police for those changes.

That is the overview of some of the changes in this bill.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I don't think we need to go clause by clause on this bill, but I would like to ask some questions on the different sections.

Ms. Biggar: Sure.

Mr. Trivers: The first section redefines bicycle as a two-wheeled device propelled by human power etc., especially, not a moped.

I wanted to comment how important it is that the Island becomes more and more bicycle friendly as we move into the future. I know that like many areas in transportation there is a lot of technological advancement in bicycles and also motor-assisted bicycles. They're not mopeds in the traditional sense of the word, but they're often bicycles that can have some sort of electric motor that aids in assistance.

I know you said you did consult with Cycling PEI on this. My first concern is that it might slow the adoption of bicycles if, in some way it actually excludes some of these power-assisted bicycles that are on the market, that people could use to go longer distances. For example, coming in from my district out in Hunter River, let's say, to Charlottetown instead of being under

completely their own power. I wanted to hear what you said about that.

Ms. Biggar: This is something that has come up at different times. Once you have anything with a power device on it, there's certain other regulations that kick in. I'll ask Graham to further expand since he's intricately involved in many of these requests that we get from individuals for clarification on what is a bicycle.

Graham Miner Director: The minister had brought this forward and you're rightfully so bringing up is in the lack of definition something with a motor is a motor vehicle or a moped or motor-assisted. But at the same time, if you have devices with motors without regulation and you call it a bicycle, then it means anybody can drive it. It means a five-year-old gets it. Can you drink and drive while using it? What if you're suspended or cancelled or prohibited under different acts or regulations?

Part of this is to clarify what a bicycle is, and then it mentions any prescribed devices or other items that may be prescribed. That's where it flows into that last part the minister had mentioned about the ability to create regulations, as an example. In a regulation, as one example, you could say a unicycle follows the rules of a bicycle even though it has one wheel. You could say –

Mr. Trivers: Tricycle.

Graham Miner Director: Yeah, and then you can start to define all these new energy efficient greener uses, but create regulations around them. For example, if you had an electric bicycle that had no standard that could go 80 kilometres an hour, well, you don't want it on the road. But if you are going to allow it you would have a manufacturing regulation and possibly an age limit. You may say: Yes you can have this, but you can't be six-years-old. That's where that regulation authority starts coming in.

Ms. Biggar: That's the purpose of this is to exclusively define what a bicycle is.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Very good. Thank you for answering that, definitely (Indistinct) my concerns.

My next question is on section 3. I don't know if you want to go with other questions from this section.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

When you brought up the unicycle and tricycle or trike, that's actually what I wanted to ask. Why then are we adding specific definitions saying bicycle is two wheels, not motorized, when there are unicycles, when there are tricycles?

Ms. Biggar: Go ahead, Graham.

Graham Miner Director: It was to take the current definition that's been there for a lot of years as to what a bicycle is to define traditionally what we know is bicycle meaning two wheels. Define it future in the act to say that it can mean more things, but because the world is evolving so quickly, to put it in a regulation to respond to it faster, to say: Okay, here is a bicycle. Within regulations probably with consultation with other groups to say: Here are unicycles, here are tricycles with wheels of such a size, but not the little ones my children might have used when they were younger.

Also, to look at another type of – in quotation marks: what might be a bicycle. Probably some of those scooters you see that have pedals on the back that really can't be used, but they're there for a manufacturing definition to get them to come into a certain standard even though they actually aren't bicycles. It's to really clarify and dig down on those type of items just for clarities because so many people ask.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Then it would be defined more so in the regulations.

Ms. Biggar: I will give you an example of it. Driving here into the city the other day, only a few months ago, it was an actual bicycle. Somebody had mounted a little

motor on it. It was a bicycle but it was not a moped.

Mr. Trivers: That's exactly what I mean. You're seeing more and more of.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah, this is to address those kinds of situations.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

Just in section 3, when you talk about the prohibition of using Jake Brakes, it says: "on a portion of the highway for which the speed limit is sixty kilometres per hour or less." I'm not sure where the reduced speed starts, but I know on the approach to the Wood Islands Ferry you go round quite a bend there. It was one of the complaints that I had from a number of the residents along there during the election. I'll have to go back and (Indistinct), but is it any area that is 60 kilometres or less?

Ms. Biggar: Yes, and there could be times posted as well. It was a response from some residents actually in Hunter River –

Ms. Compton: I think I brought it to you (Indistinct).

Ms. Biggar: And you as well. It doesn't have to be in a municipality, no. If it's a speed zone that's 60, we can restrict – I noticed them myself recently between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. that is restricted use. That's a big issue at night, usually. But we can restrict it to different times. Or just restrict it overall, yeah.

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

Ms. Compton: Yeah, which I think is wonderful. Will there be signs posted in these locations?

Ms. Biggar: Those areas that have requested, yes.

Ms. Compton: If they're hearing the Jake Brake is it call the RCMP or what's the process?

Ms. Biggar: It would be an infraction, yes. Actually, it was noted to me that when you actually hear the brake there has been an augmentation made to the actual vehicle itself. Normally they don't make that much noise. But in a lot of cases because some people like to hear that noise, there are augmentations made to the muffler on the vehicle. Actually, there aren't very many places on PEI that you should actually have to use them. It's kind of a learned behavior.

Did you want to add anything to that, Grant?

Graham Miner Director: (Indistinct).

Ms. Biggar: I covered that?

Graham Miner Director: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: As you can tell, I've had lots of discussion on it.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, minister.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I'm curious, why are you limiting it at 60 kilometres an hour?

Ms. Biggar: Do you have a suggestion of a speed?

Leader of the Opposition: I'm sort of wondering where you come up with 60 kilometres an hour?

Ms. Biggar: Generally you notice it more when it is slowed down to that speed. They shouldn't have to be using their Jake Brake if it's a slow area anyway. They shouldn't have to be using their brake. Those seem to be the areas that it's been raised as a concern that: We live in a 60-kilometre zone, we hear this all the time. It's kind of as a result of the most complaints that we have received, that's where the speed limit was.

Leader of the Opposition: I'll tell you –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

You take it coming into Borden-Carleton, Graham, you're familiar with this, go by the Carleton intersection, it's still a 90 right there, right? All the way down that stretch, of course, is a hotel there and there are several residents.

Actually, there's a pre-sixty just by the campground and then it hits the 60 after the Dickie Road, or the Train Station Road intersection. What I see all the time, and I see it in other communities, is they know the 60 is up there so they use the Jake Brake through that whole one kilometre, half a kilometre stretch until they get to the 60 when they stop using it, right?

Ms. Biggar: We can still post a sign back there if – it still gives us the ability to post a sign –

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah –

Ms. Biggar: – it doesn't just have to be in 60.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Ms. Biggar: But we have targeted the 60 because that's where we have received a lot of complaints.

Leader of the Opposition: In those areas.

Ms. Biggar: If there is an area that is of concern, and it's brought to our attention we can post a sign.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, okay. I'll send you a list of signs where I'd like them in that area.

Ms. Biggar: You go right ahead.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm curious, too –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

I'm curious, too, in 3(2.1): “unless the use of the braking system is required by an emergency.”

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Leader of the Opposition: Is there a definition that applies to the commercial truck to what would constitute an emergency?

Ms. Biggar: Graham, do you – since he deals with that.

Graham Miner Director: Okay. It was written in two ways. One is for the emergency, and that way may be on the outside chance I've lost all my braking power, and because I've lost the braking power in the vehicle, then, in an emergency, I can bring switch on. It was also to be used by emergency equipment like fire trucks that would be allowed to use them as well.

In an emergency it could be: I've lost my braking power –

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Graham Miner Director: Generally we don't expect too much of that because Jake Brakes, or engine breaks, not to use the trade name, are more effective in mountainous regions, not to heat your brakes up. As far as generally flat areas like PEI there really isn't a necessity unless it was an emergency.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I'm curious. Have there been many tickets written across the Island for this?

Ms. Biggar: We can find out. Do you have that?

Graham Miner Director: This is new to the *Highway Traffic Act* because it was never in the act before, and it had been brought forward by the minister and the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald had brought this before. You had only seen this in municipality bylaws. It's where you see these signs. Those are under municipality bylaws –

Ms. Biggar: So they can ticket.

Graham Miner Director: – so this issue came up from complaints from the public about hearing these loud noises.

Leader of the Opposition: So it's not in the *Roads Act*, Graham?

Graham Miner Director: No –

Ms. Biggar: This is new and it gives the police forces across the Island –

Leader of the Opposition: I thought it was in the *Roads Act*.

Graham Miner Director: It's in the *Highway Traffic Act* under the section with mufflers. But it's difficult to enforce because then police would be having to prove that the muffler isn't operational. Whereas the other way to do this is to say they are prohibited in residential areas, which are usually 60 kilometres, or post a sign at certain times a day it might be a higher speed. That way enforcement wouldn't have to be trying to prove defective equipment.

Ms. Biggar: So this adds on –

Leader of the Opposition: Unless anybody else has anything to say, carry the bill.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I would like to go back to section 1, and I'm going to follow-up on some of things the Member from Rustico-Emerald was saying, please, minister.

I know we've been in contact about this before, about the distinct designation, as I see it, of e-bikes or electric bikes as opposed to mopeds. As I read the amendment, or the new act, or the amendments to the act, a motor assisted pedal bicycle is considered to be synonymous with a moped. Am I correct in that assumption?

Graham Miner Director: Yes.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Why are they both in there? Is it not redundant to have a moped, a motor assisted pedal bicycle?

Ms. Biggar: It says it just does not include –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Ms. Biggar: – right, to make sure that that’s clear that it does not include that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Nowhere is it defined what a motor assisted pedal bicycle is. It doesn’t actually – that phrase does not appear anywhere else in the act.

Ms. Biggar: Yeah, go ahead. I think I know what you’re going to say, but you go ahead.

Graham Miner Director: You’ll find if you look up the definition of a moped you’ll see moped, or motor assisted, and it’ll give you a definition that it is, for the sake of – a vehicle that has an engine displacement of less than 40cc as an engine, an electric motor cannot go faster than 50 kilometres an hour on level ground, and so on.

Then there is a set of regulations under the *Highway Traffic Act* called the motor assisted pedal bicycle regulations. There is an existing set of regulations that deal directly with those units. Where it talks about you must have a Class 8 licence, which creates an age where there is a licence plate that goes with it, and those types of items.

In this definition it went on to say: Bicycle in this case was not either of those two items, but then there can be regulations to look at e-bikes and those types using manufacturing definitions.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I have the regulations in front of me, Graham. The word pedal does not appear in there. It’s called motor assisted bicycle regulations. That’s the difference.

Most other provinces, as you are probably aware, have a distinct designation for e-bikes. There are some pretty standard regulations around that. They’re usually taken from the federal highway traffic safety act, which are 500 watts, and no greater than 32 kilometres an hour, which are quite different from the moped regulations, or moped – that’s not the right word, definition of a moped.

I think that we need to separate this out. As the Member from Rustico-Emerald said, we don’t want to do anything to dissuade people from taking the green option. I think these e-

bikes provide an opportunity for Islanders who may not get on a regular bike for any number of good reasons, but want to get out of their cars. If we are one of only two provinces that requires that e-bikes be registered and the only province that would require an annual inspection on that e-bike, then I think that we’re doing the wrong thing.

Ms. Biggar: I think we have something further to add for an explanation. Graham, you go ahead.

Graham Miner Director: Under the *Highway Traffic Act* where it says moped, it says, moped or motor assisted pedal bicycle. That’s under the *Highway Traffic Act*.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: The national, the federal?

Ms. Biggar: No, the provincial.

Graham Miner Director: No, the provincial, the *Highway Traffic Act*. And other jurisdictions have looked at this as well.

The issue has been that the manufacturing standard doesn’t necessarily go to registration. What the other jurisdictions have struggled with is that they need regulations to define age. We haven’t had those regulations, but now that there’s authority in the act to create the regulation, then you can look at the e-bikes and then have that conversation. Should there be an age requirement? Should it be 16? Should it be under the federal definition of what an e-bike is?

At 500 and under and as you get to 750, then you fall into the assisted –

Ms. Biggar: This is not the full act. Graham has the full act there. Maybe what you’re reading might not be as extensive as the full act. These are just amendments to that act to fully expand a little bit more.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I’m just concerned that by specifically including motor assisted pedal bicycle in there, where we won’t be including any

regulations some requirements or minimum standards, which would allow e-bikes to be considered to be bicycles in the province.

Ms. Biggar: We can make our own regulations. This gives us the authority to make those regulations in the act itself already.

Graham Miner Director: The motor assisted pedal bicycle is not the e-bike. It's not the e-bike.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Is it a moped, then, going back to my original question? I couldn't understand why you would have a moped and that there. It seemed to me that you were trying to catch the e-bikes in that definition.

Ms. Biggar: No, there's no purpose to –

Graham Miner Director: The e-bikes within the federal definition don't necessarily have pedals, or the ones that you currently see to get around the federal regulation have put pedals on the back that really don't work.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Graham Miner Director: They've just done that as a manufacturing part, so it's created the issue with jurisdictions because of impaired laws and those types of things.

I know, talking with my colleagues, they're trying to deal with the fact that people who have suspended and cancelled licenses are using them, but if they define them as a bicycle then they're somehow being promoted as that you can – and drive using these as well. There's been a slang term used for them, liquor cycles is what they've called them.

Ms. Biggar: Is that your question?

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Yes, of course, I'm not condoning that at all, but I do want to make sure that we have the capacity (Indistinct) regulations to allow e-bikes to be used here without the onerous requirements of a moped of registration and

annual checkups and insurance requirements.

Can you assure me that that will be possible to be done in the regs?

Ms. Biggar: I don't think they're included –

Graham Miner Director: They can be included in the regulation making authority –

Ms. Biggar: They can be.

Graham Miner Director: – using the federal definition. It's just that all along in the absence of a regulation – they had to fall under this in the absence of a regulation that specifically identified them. The ones that have done that, we can do that, we can say bicycles is a prescribed device as an e-bike, and here's the terms and conditions that exist for that.

Ms. Biggar: We can do that under regulations.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, as long as that is –

Ms. Biggar: It doesn't restrict – this does not restrict us from doing that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, thank you.

Ms. Biggar: That's not the purpose of this.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to thank the minister and Mr. Miner for getting section 3 into the act that does talk about diesel engine enhanced braking and Jake braking. This was a concern in Rustico-Emerald and especially in the Hunter River area on Highway 2, so thank you so much for making this happen. I know my constituents will be very pleased.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you. I'm pleased.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: I'm okay right now that my question is actually answered.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: A point and question, and I hope to be quick.

The change in 1, does it mean you can now develop regulations in relation to things like the Segway and all those kinds of things?

Ms. Biggar: You go ahead, Graham. We've dealt with that.

Graham Miner Director: I assume at some point, because this one is a lot of work in talking with the minister, we're developing under the *Highway Traffic Act* will flow with regulations to deal with personal mobility devices, and that's another growing area of whether maybe Segways, maybe electric scooters that you see that are being used, as currently they fall under the definition, as an example, of a pedestrian like wheelchairs do.

Electric wheelchairs fall under a pedestrian definition, which means that allows them on the sidewalk. If you didn't have it there, then (Indistinct) and that's an area that's growing rapidly and we're working on that to probably come out with something that deals with personal mobility devices that will capture all of these other items that are just coming at us rapidly that have motors in them, or –

Ms. Biggar: This is electrified wheelchairs, or mobility – the little mopeds you see, or devices for people with mobility challenges.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Just a follow up point to that. I note my brother-in-law actually recently purchased a – I think it's called a hoverboard or something like that, but it's a one-wheeled skateboard, essentially, that operates on battery power, and it can go in either direction, and it's meant primarily I think for fun, but it can go as fast as a Segway can, I gather, up or down hills or wherever you want to go. It has lights on the front and back to tell you which way you're going, the whole deal.

But anyway, so the two-wheel part there, I didn't know whether that follows it or not.

That was just a point. I'm not expecting an answer.

Ms. Biggar: These are all things that we are reviewing, because there are invariably a lot of innovative devices being created, so it does create more of a challenge to address these things and it's something we'll continue to review.

Mr. J. Brown: Great, thanks.

Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Ms. Biggar: Thank you. Oh, question.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: In section 9 I had a question.

Ms. Biggar: Sure. Yes?

Mr. Aylward: I understand what you're talking about as far as zero level blood alcohol. Where does this play into (Indistinct) for drugs? Because marijuana in particular is very common for youth to be consuming –

Ms. Biggar: Correct. It does cover that as well.

Mr. Aylward: It does, okay.

Ms. Biggar: Yes. Impairment is impairment in your blood, and there are devices that will test drug impaired as well.

Mr. Aylward: Okay, but it's just the way it reads blood alcohol concentration, so that's why I picked that, but I wanted to ensure that it also covered off on drugs.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct). It encompasses that, but not just blood alcohol content.

Mr. Aylward: Okay –

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Any given day you pick up the *Guardian*, and I know it's a bone of contention for Judge Nancy Orr – well, all the judiciary here on PEI, but Judge Orr seems to be the

one that jumps out on it more frequently than others. The issue that I see is not as much with youth drinking and driving. The issue I'm seeing is more so 40, 45, 50-year-olds –

Ms. Biggar: Habitual.

Mr. Aylward: Habitual, thank you. I guess I'm wondering: Why don't we get to the point and just say enough is enough and it's zero tolerance for everybody, regardless?

Ms. Biggar: I do have a number of measures in the next bill that is aimed specifically at the habitual driver, and once I get back on –

Mr. Aylward: I know that has a lot to do with impounding vehicles and things like that.

Ms. Biggar: Also the ignition and a number of different things, but certainly it's important I think as we go forward. We have made a lot of headway in addressing the issue. Thanks to MADD, of course, and all the different promotions that we do around impaired, and the 911, the general public are assisting, which was something we never saw that much before.

Everybody is much more conscious of it. If you look at the number of impaired driving convictions today compared to the 1980s, I think Graham has that off the top of his head, but the number of drivers have increased probably almost threefold, and yet our actual impaired driving convictions – and that's not because we're not catching them, it's because there is that 1% of our population that no matter what you do, they're still going to get in that car and drive. I agree with you that they are habitual. But the more stringent regulations that we can put in and require them to be accountable for their actions before they kill someone on these highways, I'm going to do everything I can to put as many regulations in as I can.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks, Chair.

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

I move the title as amended.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report the bill agreed to with amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker (Casey): Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, that the 22nd order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 22, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, Bill No. 51, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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 Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the bill be now read clause by clause?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Chair, I ask the members to have Graham Miner attend the table with me, and I also have – oh, go ahead. Sorry.

Chair: No, go ahead.

Ms. Biggar: Okay. I also have an amendment, again, on this one because as a result of the other amendments, what I am asking to amend that:

1. The title of Bill No. 51 is amended by the deletion of the words “(No. 3)” and the substitution of the words “No. 2”.

Basically it would be Bill No. 51, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* and it would be substituted – instead of No. 3 in there it will have No. 2.

I move that motion.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Okay. Members, I have a bit of an overview of what’s actually in this and if you wish or –

Mr. MacKay: (Indistinct) few questions.

Ms. Biggar: Okay. You have some questions on that or would it be okay if I read what’s actually in it?

Mr. MacEwen: Carry the bill.

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I understand this bill and I applaud you for the work on putting this through. Again, my issue comes back to more so around the habitual –

Ms. Biggar: Yes?

Mr. Aylward: – individuals that continually break this law. I have heard time and time again where an individual would go to court; they will get sentenced to weekend time which, okay, I agree with that. They still need to support their family and work. But the troubling thing is the amount of fines that are levied and never collected upon. I think we need to look at that and put more teeth in place so that the fines can be collected.

Ms. Biggar: I agree, hon. member. We don’t set the fines on a DUI.

Mr. Aylward: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: That’s justice that sets that so within our department these are other consequences, I guess I’ll call it, as a result of someone having gone to court and being fined. But the collection of fines as a result of an impaired driving conviction are not within the department of transportation. They are within the department of justice so I’m not up and able to respond to that.

Mr. Aylward: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

The other concern I have, and I guess probably it will go back to justice as well, but quite often these habitual offenders – well, obviously they can’t get insurance

because they're not licensed, but they will go out and buy \$150 vehicle or they have a couple of vehicles out in the back 40 that they will put on the road so there is no registration, there's no insurance, there is no license and, again, they're impaired. They're on the highways, the byways, the back country roads, and they're a menace. There's something going to happen here.

Ms. Biggar: I think Graham can respond to some of that to you, hon. member.

Graham Miner Acting Director: I can tell you in terms of current provincial laws for the habitual offender, for example, the habitual offender who stopped, who has had multiple infractions, those vehicles now are being impounded for six months. Enforcement agencies have that type of power which in itself almost means that the vehicle will probably be sold to recover the costs of the impoundment fees.

Dealing with that, and because the people you're talking about – that's where so many of these measures starting earlier on are to develop to try and change behaviours like using ignition interlock, mandatory rehab programs. But then there's that last group that may have been in the (Indistinct) for a while. One of the most effective ways of trying to stop them from driving is taking the vehicles, and it doesn't matter whose name they're in. They're impounded for a six-month period with a right to appeal.

Ms. Biggar: When we look at graduated drivers or non-graduated drivers this is going to also – this will impact. I want to mention this because if your son has got the car for the weekend and gets stopped and all of a sudden impounded for 30 days, even though you're the registered owner of the vehicle, there is an appeal process (Indistinct) –

Mr. Aylward: Chair, I completely understand that –

Ms. Biggar: – you know, yeah, okay, yeah –

Mr. Aylward: – and I concur with it –

Ms. Biggar: But I agree 100% –

Mr. Aylward: – but again I'm getting back to these individuals –

Ms. Biggar: I agree.

Mr. Aylward: – that are taking a car that's not even fit to be on the road in the first place and getting into the vehicle, it's not registered, it's not insured, they don't have a driver's license, and more than likely they're impaired, and they're going to take a life.

Ms. Biggar: Well –

Mr. Aylward: That's what I think we need to address as well. I think we need stronger enforcement and penalties in place to address the habitual offenders.

Ms. Biggar: I guess what I would suggest that I will review – and it may be there – that whoever is – if we can prove it, selling an individual the vehicle. I think that – there's some onus as well on – if you're selling a car to someone, you should maybe be assured that that person either has a driver's license or has the ability to register and license that car. That may be something that we need to review. That might be an additional –

Mr. Aylward: That might be a good point.

Ms. Biggar: – an additional, and to explore that, and I certainly will make a commitment to explore that.

Mr. Aylward: Okay.

Ms. Biggar: Okay.

Some Hon. Members: Carry the bill.

Chair: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Ms. Biggar: Any question?

Mr. J. Brown: I do have a question.

Ms. Biggar: You've got a question?

Mr. J. Brown: Yes.

Ms. Biggar: Okay.

Mr. J. Brown: Is it possible to get the ignition lock program if you have not paid the fine back for your DUI offense?

Ms. Biggar: Graham deals with the ignition everyday and I get the calls too, but I usually call him. Go ahead.

Graham Miner Acting Director: If you have been suspended by the courts and have an unpaid fine suspension in place, then we cannot issue a restricted driver's license for you to use the ignition interlock. If you are under a suspension for that then, as it sits now, no, we can't introduce you into the ignition interlock program.

Mr. J. Brown: Okay. I think that answers part of the member's question from previously.

The other thing I would point out, too, and (Indistinct) section 255.5 of the Criminal Code, just to the previous point, about repeat offenders. There's a lot of case law that goes along with that which would essentially say that there is a certain group within society – and this is to the hon. member's comments – that it wouldn't matter what punishment you put on them. They will reoffend because they have a problem.

Ms. Biggar: You could say you're going to be executed if you drive impaired and it would not matter to some people.

Mr. J. Brown: Yeah, so I wonder if what you need to be thinking about is – the fine piece aside, and back to my first question – whether there's a way to get those repeat offenders under an ignition interlock program so that they are permitted to drive within a framework that does allow you to monitor them so they're not going out and paying for a car but not registering it or stealing somebody else's license plate or whatever they might do.

Ms. Biggar: That would be under justice, but some of the changes that we're making increases the amount of time. If you're a repeat offender, it's going to increase the amount of time that we track you. It can track you right up to 10 years from the time, so we have that ability, but what you're talking about would be under justice as well.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you.

An Hon. Member: Carry the bill.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: I move the title as amended.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2).*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Mr. Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair report the bill agreed to with amendment.

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

Ms. Biggar: Thank you.

Chair: Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 3)*, I beg leave to report that the committee has gone through the said bill and has agreed to same with amendment. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

Speaker (Casey): Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, that the 26th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 26, *Municipal Government Act*, Bill No. 58, in Committee.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll now call on the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton to come down and chair the Committee of the Whole House.

Chair (J. Brown): The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration a bill to be intituled *Municipal Government Act*.

When we last left the consideration of this act I believe the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters was speaking to an amendment proposed by the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, are you done of your remarks?

Mr. Mitchell: Can I ask for permission to bring a staff member on the floor?

Chair: First, can we have permission to bring a stranger to the floor?

Thank you.

If it was the Member from Souris-Elmira, we want to him his opportunity.

Okay, I guess Member from Souris-Elmira is done of his remarks, and are you sure you want to speak to it?

Mr. Myers: Sure (Indistinct).

Chair: Can you introduce yourself before we get into it?

Samantha Murphy Manager: Sure. Samantha Murphy, manager of Municipality Affairs.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: It's great that we have had a lot of lively debate on this bill. It's a big bill and that's why it's important to have these discussions in here.

While I understand there has been a significant amount of meeting with the federation and they're pushing it, and anybody who is covered by a municipality

has had some sort of a voice during this process, I do represent, as do many of my colleagues here, a large portion of an unincorporated area.

In my district I would have St. Peters, I would have central Kings, I would have Cardigan, I'd have Georgetown, then I would have the back part of Montague, would be – just barely grazing into Montague would come into mine. Then I have all of those parts that are in between. That's where some of my concerns are about.

When I came to – so this is going on down home, the Three Rivers municipalities meeting. They've met for a long time, and they have a plan trying – the direction that they're going.

When I went to one of the meetings where they kind of rolled out the plan, the one in Cardigan, in particular, there was a lot of outcry from the unincorporated areas. I know one gentleman who spoke, John Walsh, from Burnt Point, he's now on the Three Rivers group. What they did, they reached out to create positions for unincorporated areas to sit on their board, which will help bring a voice to their table, which is something that I have been saying from the start. It's great if you live in a municipality, you have that voice.

The issue on the minister having the control is that this group had to work really hard to bring it as far as they have. When they met the roadblock of the unincorporated areas – and I'm not saying they're out of the woods, yet – when they met the roadblock of the unincorporateds they adjusted their trajectory and they said: We have to include people in. I think they've expanded by four people to ensure that the unincorporated people have someone to speak for them. Or somebody that they can, at least, go to and say: You're my rep on this group, and here are the things that I'm concerned about.

Because they have to work so hard for it, it takes consensus building, I guess you would call it, where you really have – if you don't have the power and authority to force something, you have to work really hard to get it.

What's great about Prince Edward Island over the years is we have some strong communities, and we have them because people had to work together and push hard. It has nothing to do with you, as minister. It is, to me, everything to do with the title of minister having that type of authority. Where you're here for now, at some point it'll be somebody else and at some point, down the road there will be somebody else, again. Who is to guarantee that we won't get somebody who takes that power and really utilizes it as its own?

The minister of education gave himself a lot of power here one time, if you recall. He used it to disband the school boards. Then he used the same power that he had granted himself through the legislative process to appoint new people by himself. While I guess you could argue the outcome of that, whether or not that was something that worked or didn't work in his favour, what it boils down to is that it really rubbed a lot of people the wrong way.

If it's government's intention to incorporate all of the Prince Edward Island, and I understand that that's probably something that they would wish to see, I think the way it's happening now is probably the right way because the people are engaging themselves.

The process in Three Rivers was void of political interference, I'll say. I didn't get in the middle of it. I spoke when they asked me to. One the first nights that it came up I was at one of the council meetings when it came up, the idea of going to government to ask for money to help them to go out and do the first plan, the first report that they used to kind of be the basis of it.

What I had said that night was I think it's a good idea to go down this road, see what it would look like and see that plan, but otherwise I'm just going to stay out of it. If everybody agrees that they want to do this and work together, it may be best if politicians, at least, at the provincial level, stay out of it.

I still think that we're a province of people who work together. I still think we're a province where people can come to a consensus like a municipality. I think where government could really help the process along is to show people the benefits.

When I talked about this the other day I said: I don't know what the benefit is. I'm not sure how to do down to Lauching loop and say to somebody: This is really good for you. When they're looking at me saying: I have everything I want, I'm on the water, I'm surrounded by trees, it's quiet here at night. That's all I want. I want the snowplow to go by in the winter. Otherwise, I really don't –

Mr. Roach: Call the hour.

Mr. Myers: – want a whole lot.

Chair: The hour has been called.

Mr. Mitchell: 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.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having had under consideration a bill to be intituled *Municipal Government Act*, 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 (Casey): Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, this House is in recess until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Speaker (Casey): Good evening, hon. members.

Some Hon. Members: Good evening, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, before we get started, I just have to let you know that I was at a meeting at supper hour of the One Hundred Women Who Care of Prince Edward Island, and we were able to give Hospice PEI a cheque for \$14,000 tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: It's a great organization.

Ms. Biggar: Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Biggar: I'd like to also mention the great work that the Prince County chapter of 100 women who care are doing. We've only been a year in existence, and the hon. Tina Mundy is part of that –

Speaker: The hon. minister of family –

Ms. Biggar: Oh, excuse me, Madam Speaker, I don't usually make that error often.

Anyway, I want to mention the work that they're doing. We've raised over \$60,000 this year.

Speaker: I hear that, excellent.

Ms. Biggar: Just last Thursday night the International Children's Memorial Place were the recipients, so congratulations.

Speaker: What a great organization, yeah, you too.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Ms. Biggar: No, 10,000.

Motions Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Opposition would now like to call Motion 39 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: (Indistinct) read, Madam Speaker.

The debate was adjourned by the hon. Premier.

Speaker: Hon. members, that motion has been read and the debate was adjourned by the hon. Premier.

You have the floor.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

First, let me begin my remarks by saying that functions performed by the office of a children's advocate as they exist in other jurisdictions substantially exist here on Prince Edward Island. It's been the program of our government to address those needs and, in particular, those needs where they lead to offering enhanced frontline services.

That said, government is committed to the intent of the inquest jury's recommendation to give a strong voice to children, and notably when adults in their lives are engaged in custody conflict.

The service providers, both within government and in agencies such as at police services who are supporting children and families, have a great deal of shared knowledge and experience to support children and families during difficult times in their life and difficult transitions.

Government has been drawing upon and collaborating with service providers in the field of support for children in order to utilize their expertise and to fill gaps in service.

Government is working across departments to enhance frontline supports to children, and to ensure that their voices are heard. We are also working together to improve supports for vulnerable children in high-risk family situations.

I'm pleased to provide an update to the Legislature about the progress in a number of these areas. Earlier in this session we announced a significant initiative to provide supervised access and notably where parental conflict occurs in either access to children or in the exchange of children between parents in a conflicted situation.

Government has moved forward with plans to provide a safe, neutral, and child-focused setting in which supervised visits or exchanges can take place. This supervised exchange service addresses conflict by providing a safe and neutral place for children to spend time with a parent or to be exchanged between parents. There will soon be sites at 10 locations throughout the province, from O'Leary and Alberton in the west, to Souris and Montague in the east, with a French speaking service at *Centre Cap Enfants* Wellington, with a service

devoted to First Nations families at the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre in Charlottetown, as well as services in Charlottetown, Cornwall, Stratford, Summerside and, as I mentioned, O'Leary, Montague, Souris, and Alberton.

In addition, there's a significant effort being made in parenting coordination, and government is developing a program for parenting coordination which is a dispute resolution process assisting high-conflict parents to implement their existing parenting plan in a child-focused manner. The goal is to minimize parental conflict and reduce the risk to children. We will have an update on this program in the coming months.

In the spring session of this session it was indicated that government would create a children's lawyer position and the resources for that position have been approved and the recruitment is now in progress. That will put in place a person with a role that differs from a child advocate office in the sense that a children's lawyer is a front-line position working directly with children to provide legal counsel.

I add that in scoping this position we have stipulated that we are particularly interested in lawyers who have expertise in alternative dispute resolution. The children's lawyer will be able to legally represent the voice of the child or the child whose families are experiencing separation or divorce. This person will be a front-line worker who ensures the participation of children and youth in court matters that will have a significant impact on them. It may include legal advocacy, clinical investigation, and clinical advocacy. This new front-line position will ensure the voices of children are heard both inside and outside of the court process.

When I spoke previously on this motion on November 22nd I spoke about the bridge situation table, and we're pleased that that is fully operational. It meets twice a week and has had upwards of 15 referrals that allows the people who come together in that bridge, representing a wide array of services, both from within and outside of government, from community agencies, from policing services, from the school system, to work together to avoid or to break down silos that may exist.

One of the issues that situation table addressed really as a foundational piece was to reach agreements with the policing services, both the municipal services and the RCMP, to permit the sharing of information. I'm optimistic that through the work that the various services and the people who are directly involved in the situation table, through the work that they're doing together, they will not only put in place the ability to share information and to address situations together as they arise or as they are referred to that situation table, but they will build a new sense of partnership and an ability to solve problems and to further avoid silos that can arise in addressing and in directly serving the needs of children who are in situations with a high risk or harm. That's in particular those issues that the situation table has been established to deal with.

They, as I said, meet twice a week, and if it is the case that there's an elevated risk of harm the situation table is capable of meeting within 24 to 48 hours. It's a rapid, risk-based intervention that enables the service to be offered to individuals and to families who are assessed to be cases or a situation of an acutely elevated risk of harm and to do so within a short timeframe.

In addition, there is a further piece that comes with the situation table and it is to address policy opportunities or systemic issues that arise from the work of the situation table where they may identify either practices, or it could even be legislation, that stands as a barrier to the smooth cooperation and cross-functional collaboration of the services in question, and indeed to ensure, where it is possible or where it is evident, that a change in policy or a change in practice is in order that that is recommended and brought forward, most likely brought forward through another working group – and a very effective working group; in fact, it was responsible for giving birth to the situation table, and that is the regular meeting of the social policy deputies, in effect the meeting of the ministries that are responsible for dealing with social policy issues.

Let me mention a number of other programs that address in a proactive way the situation of children and families in a way that endeavours to avoid the family relationships

breaking down to the point where the child might be in a situation of risk. The Triple P, Positive Parenting Program, that has been built up over several years and was formally unveiled in the spring of this year. The Period of Purple Crying is a program that's aimed at assisting families to deal with trouble. Family Violence Prevention Program, Parenting from Two Homes Program, the Best Start Program, or more recently the Strong Start Program that is aimed at early years literacy. Information sessions on custody and access. There is the women's wellness program for new mothers and infants, and the Strongest Families Program.

In 2017 the chief public health officer will write a report on the well-being of children in Prince Edward Island and that's expected late next year. If we can judge by it, and I'm sure we can, the most recent report of the chief public health officer on the determinants of health, I'm confident that we can look forward to that as a comprehensive and frank and helpful assessment when it comes to the well-being of children.

There is more work that is being done to ensure that the voices of children are heard both in our day-to-day service provision to children and in the broader policy direction of government. In general terms, we are committed to work to improving the following areas: improving accountability for government, to address any further legislation or practices that prevent information sharing in the case of high-risk situations involving children and, not least of all, more public education about the rights of children.

These initiatives, which are significant individually and then collectively, show a comprehensive commitment by government, a commitment to provide frontline services where it's clear that there will be a benefit, in terms of direct service delivery, to children and, in particular, to children at risk. That's where we are committed as a government, where we have taken numerous steps and where we have dedicated resources, and in our view, that is where the resources and the priorities should be directed, which is to direct frontline service.

In our view, a children's advocate is a step removed from that. More of an arm's length review of services with periodic reports to the Legislature, which may indeed be something that as we work through these various initiatives, as we move down the path, as we learn where we can make the greatest difference, as we see how we can make some progress, that may indeed be something that is in the offing.

At this stage it's our view that the most important thing to do is to deliver frontline services to address the priorities that we have and to implement them, and that's exactly what we're doing. Without saying that we think the idea of a children's advocate is in any way wrong, we don't think it is a priority that should come ahead of the initiatives that we are taking and supporting.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the motion before I go to the mover to close debate?

Mr. Myers: Have I spoken to it?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

An Hon. Member: Twice.

Speaker: No.

Mr. Myers: Okay, I'll speak to it.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Since last election we've been talking a lot about a child advocate and the important need of a child advocate here on Prince Edward Island. I know the government's common defense has been: We don't need one because, first I heard, everyone's a child advocate, and then I heard that: We have all these pieces in place and they'll all act as a child advocate.

I think the part that the government seems to be missing on this is that a child advocate is independent, and their independence is independent of government, which I know bothers the Premier because he

micromanages everything that happens in government.

We think it's important. The reason it's important is that because if you have someone whose only interest is the child, not government, not a minister, not a deputy, not a premier, not any other mechanism that's elected or selected by government, you have somebody who can actually put a child first. That's why over here for the last two years we've been talking about the importance of a child advocate.

A child advocate shouldn't be looked at as a bad thing by government, because it's really not. It's a child-centred person who can always make decisions on what's best for the child. It's something that I strongly believe in, because I do believe there's still gaps in the system, and while I don't by any means question the current minister and what she brings to the table on that front, I do think that it's a minister by minister thing.

We found that the minister that existed in the previous go-around before the last election, she was terrible. I mean, she really only thought of herself. I remember one time questions being brought to her attention in the House, and she talked about children that were in custody, and she called them her children. I was like I don't know how government could have gone any more wrong than they did by putting their trust in that person to be the minister responsible. That's kind of where the need comes for.

So it's not really necessarily a shot at the current minister, it's the fact that the revolving door of government means that there's always somebody who is new who is going to be minister responsible for the welfare of children in this province, and we can't always ensure that we're going to have somebody that's good.

It's kind of what I talked about when I talked about, earlier today, the municipalities act. It's not a shot at the current minister, it's the fact that we don't know how long he'll be there or if he'll be there 10 years from now. The same kind of thing applies to the minister that's responsible for children right now.

It more has to do with if we put a person in place and their own responsibility is the welfare of children that they'll always make the decision that's best for the child. That's why we continue to fight for it. I know that government is moving and they're doing things. A child advocate just kind of takes it to that next level where you're able to say: Look, that person is completely independent, can make decisions independent of any government interference, I'll call it, for the lack of a better word. I'm not inferring that there is any interference going on, I'm just saying that there could be on any given case in any given time with any given government, not this one or a government in the future.

If government takes the step today and become pioneers for Prince Edward Island's children, then any subsequent government will have to live up to the high standards that you set. That's why I think it's important. Let's just set a high standard. We can do it together, you'll do it without any opposition. We will all applaud while it goes on and then it's there for any government. If there's a government down the road that isn't in line with children or social issues, there's somebody there who can always say: I'm going to make sure that this happens regardless of what you say or regardless of what direction happens at the executive branch of government.

I think it's important, I'm going to continue to think it's important, and I think it's something – I want to see government set the bar high. This is a place where you can do it. Let's set the bar for children on Prince Edward Island once and for all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Any other members who would like to speak before I go to the mover to close debate?

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock to close debate.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I wonder if I could request the podium.

Thank you.

It's once again with great determination that I rise in the Legislature to urge this government to put in place, finally, an office of a child advocate here in our province. It's been a little bit of a time since we first brought this motion to the floor in this session. There's been a significant amount of speakers on this motion and I appreciate their comments and their input on this, what I feel, urgently required service here on Prince Edward Island.

One of the minister's spoke about reports and the great work that government does, and spoke to great lengths, in particular, about these reports. I just want to remind this government that yes, okay, you might commission a fair number of reports, but whether or not these reports are the proper way to be spending taxpayers' dollars is to be seen. Unfortunately, many of these reports never actually see the light of day. They're commissioned, they're paid for, I assume, and then they're put on a shelf somewhere. For example, the report on mental health and addictions, there was a strategy released several weeks ago, but still, the report has never been tabled. It's nowhere to be seen to try to find out where the strategies were developed from.

I also back to the report that I believe was written back as far as 2007-2008, on dementia. Again, nowhere to be seen, never tabled, never made public, and why? To me, I can only assume government hid that report because they're afraid that it's actually going to cost money to implement some of the recommendations in the report.

The Premier, and subsequent other speakers, spoke about the great work that's being done, and I don't disagree. There is some tremendous work being done, like the supervised visits and exchanges being set-up across Prince Edward Island in neutral settings. I think that is a good move and I applaud that.

Again, I question the priorities of this government. One of the very first things that this Premier did when he came into power was hire an ethics and integrity commissioner. An ethics and integrity commissioner versus a child advocate. What does that say? What does that tell the general public that we need a commissioner who is going to concentrate on the ethics

and integrity of elected officials and of civil servants versus putting money towards a child advocacy office here on Prince Edward Island?

We commend the efforts, as I said, of the various government agencies to carry out their own kind of advocacy on the part of vulnerable children in our province. We recognize that a number of steps have been taken towards ensuring our children in our justice system are treated with respect and dignity.

I want to remind everybody that the office of the child advocate would be an independent office of the Legislative Assembly. The office would work to represent the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children and youth throughout the province who are receiving, or should be receiving, services under the child and family services act and the *Adoption Act*, and they advocate directly with children and youth and review public services.

The children's advocate would be empowered by legislation to review, investigate, and provide recommendations relating to the welfare and interests of children and youth.

Essentially, we're not saying that there wouldn't be responsibility still for various departments, but one of the essential things that came out of the inquest was that the silos weren't speaking to one another. The departments just didn't have a level of communication.

Now, I know you're talking about the Hub model. You're talking about this bridge program and the Triple P program. Again, unless you have some direct oversight that's completely independent from this Legislative Assembly that doesn't haven't direct responsibility underneath a minister of the Crown, then I'm fearful that we're going to still continue to go down that road.

Our province has made, as I have said, many positive changes in the delivery of services to our children, but we on this side of the House believe that a child and youth advocate with the necessary resources could offer a more complete and unified service. It would hopefully work in collaboration and cooperation with all the various government

services involved. Perhaps some of those services could be incorporated into a new child and youth advocacy office.

I know that we do not have the populations of many of our provincial counterparts, but I do strongly believe in my heart that with some assessments, streamlining, and realignment of our existing services we can provide the services of a child advocate office in the best interests of our children.

Therefore, I would ask that our Legislative Assembly support this motion and bring to our province, finally, a program that is important to the future and well-being of our children and youth populations.

I'm calling upon every member in this House to stand and vote in favour of this motion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Are you ready for the question?

An Hon. Member: Standing vote, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: A standing vote has been requested.

Sergeant-at-Arms, ring the bells.

[The bells were rung]

Mr. J. Brown: Madam Speaker, government members are ready for the vote.

Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. MacEwen: Madam Speaker, the opposition is ready for the vote.

Speaker: Thank you.

Members, I would ask all those voting against the motion to please rise.

Clerk: The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, the hon. Premier, the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, the hon. Minister of

Health and Wellness, the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot and the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Speaker: Thank you.

I'd ask all those voting in favour of the motion to please rise.

Clerk: The hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Opposition House Leader, the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, and the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Speaker: Hon. members, the motion has been defeated.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Opposition now would like to call on Motion No. 47 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. members, that has been moved and the debate is underway, and the debate was adjourned by the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you –

Speaker: Hon. member, before you get started, I think there's a little beard left in your ear or something.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, you have the floor.

Mr. R. Brown: She got you.

Ms. Compton: (Indistinct) Santa.

Mr. MacEwen: That's just Christmas cheer.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: A little Christmas cheer.

Mr. LaVie: I think you might be looking at a little grey hair.

Speaker: Hon. member, I just want to remind you that the debate is on an amendment:

Whereas the Standing Committee on Education and Economic Development recommended in its report to the House yesterday “that government consider extending an exemption to the provincial portion of the HST to energy efficient forms of home heating”.

Mr. LaVie: Sure.

Speaker: You’re speaking to the amendment.

Mr. LaVie: I’m speaking to the amendment, an amendment from the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Madam Speaker, I’m not going to talk long.

I had my speech on this and I want to give somebody else an opportunity to speak. It’s just when we talk HST and we talk carbon taxes – and it’s taxes. We always seem – when we want money we tax. Our job creation is poor, creating industry is poor, but we tax. We tax so government can spend. We take out of the most vulnerable people – we take right out of their pockets.

On PEI we survive. Not all people, but there’s a lot of people just surviving on PEI. As I said in Question Period, my district is not the only district like that. I’m invited into homes, and it’s not good. People are just surviving, and people cannot afford another tax on top of a tax.

As it was stated in Question Period, climate change – we know the climate is changing and we have to change. We understand that. We see it daily. I see it in my own district, of the climate change. I’ve seen the sand dunes disappear over one storm. The tides are rising. There’s water on both sides of the causeway there. When I was a young fellow there used to be houses on that causeway. Now, you wouldn’t live there today because

of the rising tides. There’s no way. There’s water on both sides of the road now.

Mr. R. Brown: Is that 100 years ago?

Mr. LaVie: No, it’s not 100 years ago, Madam Speaker.

I said I’m not going to talk long, I’m not – but I just want to be very careful about the most vulnerable people that are living on Prince Edward Island.

Now, at one time the middle class used to keep us going, used to keep PEI afloat, but it’s getting hard for the middle class. It’s getting tougher for the middle class to keep her afloat. Now, what this government is doing is keeping her afloat until the next vote. They just keep doing that. But we’ve seen them putting their lifejackets on with the 18%. The lifejackets are on now. They’re just getting ready to jump ship.

So –

Speaker: You’re speaking to the motion, hon. member?

Mr. LaVie: Yes.

Speaker: The amendment, sorry.

Mr. LaVie: Speaking to the amendment.

Just be careful when we tax. We tax, and people, they’re not getting nothing in return. Tax upon tax. There’s no job creation. We close down jobs. Yeah, you created a few jobs. Let’s say the minister stands up, created 250 jobs. But, he never talks about the 300 he lost, or the 400 he lost in the fish plant. He always gets up and talks about the ones he created.

People are not working so they’re finding it awful tough. Even the ones that are working are finding it tough with taxes. It’s HST, now it’s a carbon tax. People can’t afford it. People are surviving. There’s kids going to school hungry, and you fellows see because I’m not the only one that knows this. You fellows know it, and we’ve got to do something about it.

We just can’t stand up here on the motion and talk about it. Something has to be done. There’s people out there driving with no

registration, no insurance. Well, they're only living day to day, and some are not living day to day.

I hear the heart-wrenching stories. I've seen me in houses for two, two-and-a-half hours, and there's not only a tear running down their eye, there's a tear running down my eye because I feel so bad for them. Here I am, the local MLA representing the government, and I can't do nothing about it. I can get up here and speak on their behalf, but I've been speaking on their behalf now for five years, and I'm not seeing the change. I'm seeing another tax.

I went through the HST. I went through the HST hike. Now I'm going through the carbon tax. Now, all of a sudden, there'll be a carbon tax hike whenever you run out of money again. Whenever you've (Indistinct) another \$65 million, you'll just tax them because we're not creating jobs for them.

Put them to work. You'll get your taxes when they work. Lower their taxes, find work for them, then you'll collect your taxes. But not having these people work, we're not getting taxes from them.

We're not like Alberta, Ontario. We haven't got big industry for these people. We've got seasonal industries. We've got a fishing season that's seasonal. At the very best you get six months, and that's a good year as a fisher, if you get six months. Used to get six months when I was a young fellow fishing. They used to start in April and go to December, but not anymore. In closing, I'm just going to mention one more thing. When we're talking taxes, HST – when you're raising the HST and you're bringing in the carbon tax, and then when you go to raise the carbon tax, because I imagine you will, (Indistinct) you did it. I've been here for five years now. I'm starting to catch on. I caught on.

Think of the most vulnerable people on Prince Edward Island that are not working. Just think of them. Think when you're out campaigning, and you fellows saw it in your last campaign because I've seen it, some of the houses that you are at. These aren't bad people. These are people that just can't afford – and there's no work. There's no work for them, and that's right through the country. That's all through the country.

So just remember, when you put this carbon tax on, who you're taxing and what the tax is for. Remember the kids that go to school hungry. Our food banks, we see it in the news where our food banks are up and our Lions Club, they do Christmas, and that's up. Our turkeys, you've seen the turkey drive across Prince Edward Island, Boomer Gallant and the CBC, how many turkeys they collect and how many turkeys they give out. That's because people can't afford it, and these are good people, real good people. Because I sat down and talked with each and every one of them that called me. I even sit down and talk with the devil. I can talk to anybody. I enjoy a good talk, and they'll give you a heart-wrenching story. It's not their fault. They're all good people. Rich, poor, or otherwise, we're all equal. We've all got a heartbeat.

But something we can't do, we can't keep taxing the province that is broke. We've got to get our priorities straight, and our top priorities should be our education and our health care. That should be our top priority.

In closing, just remember my words when you're campaigning next time or when you want to raise taxes, because I imagine once you get this tax in you're going to raise it again (Indistinct) because once again, you've got the HST and you raised it, you've got the carbon tax in and you're going to raise it too.

I'm going to close (Indistinct) for the next speaker, because I imagine there's lots of speakers that want to speak to this because it's a very important issue, and we want to get it out there, and it's for the people of Prince Edward Island, especially the ones vulnerable.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'll just get the podium. It might be easier than shuffling papers.

Mr. LaVie: Get something to lean on.

Ms. Biggar: All right. I have got strong legs to stand on my own two feet.

Madam Speaker, in regard to this amendment of the motion, what we want to do is to help people reduce cost as they reduce their energy use.

The cheapest source of energy is the energy we don't use. EfficiencyPEI, formerly the Office of Energy Efficiency, was established to help Islanders reduce their energy costs and become more energy efficient. Since opening in 2008 efficiencyPEI has provided: over \$7 million in grants to over 8,000 residential clients; \$9.4 million in loans to 1,775 residential clients; a free weatherization service to 3,600 low-income homes; over 500 businesses with programs and services to help reduce energy consumption; and generated over \$50 million in building renovation expenditures. Our incentives have helped Islanders move towards more efficient energy use and towards more environmentally-friendly forms of energy.

In 2015-2016, 85% of all grants offered through efficiencyPEI were for air-sourced heat pumps. So far this year heat pumps comprised approximately 80% of all application at efficiencyPEI. EfficiencyPEI expects to deliver grants to Islanders right through to the end of the fiscal year. Islanders want to be part of making this a province with reduced energy use, with reliable energy supplies, and increasingly with energy that comes from renewable sources such as wind and biomass.

EfficiencyPEI has recently announced its new home energy audit program. Financial assistance is available to assist Islanders in completing an EnerGuide evaluation of their home. EfficiencyPEI will provide an initial subsidy of \$150 or half the cost paid directly to the audit company.

Additionally, if homeowners complete recommended energy upgrades, efficiencyPEI will provide additional subsidy up to the total value of the energy audit, a maximum of \$150. This is in addition to efficiencyPEI's rebates for heating equipment and building envelope upgrades. Anyone interested in having an energy audit on their homes may contact efficiencyPEI.

We are looking at ways of satisfying our province's energy needs in ways that preserve the environment while fostering economic growth. Prince Edward Islanders need an energy system that is dependable, that is affordable and, as much as possible, that is renewable.

Over the past several months we have been working with ordinary Islanders, with industry experts, and with academics to come up with a forward-looking provincial energy strategy. The Province of Prince Edward Island is developing a 10-year energy strategy to reduce energy use, to establish cleaner and locally produced energy sources, and moderate potential price increases.

The goal of this strategy is to develop a stronger, more sustainable and resilient province. The strategy was developed following three guiding principles: reducing greenhouse gas emissions, implementing cost-effective actions and decisions, and creating local economic opportunities.

The energy strategy will result in energy savings for Islanders, and create greater self-sufficiency by reducing our reliance on imported fossil fuels. It will create new employment and economic opportunities through retrofitting projects and the generation of more locally produced energy.

The strategy will pursue six fundamental goals which Islanders will be anxious to take advantage of: reliability; energy systems that meet our needs, now and in the future; influence over our future; greater controls over prices; reducing reliance on external market forces; leadership; demonstrating energy leadership within Canada and globally; to capitalize on our ability to be innovative and flexible; a testing ground for new technologies and processes; leveraging resources through partnerships; research projects and new developments.

Consider our context. Options that take into account the province's unique characteristics including size, infrastructure, and rural nature, and one that aligns with federal policies and regional opportunities.

While policies in this area are being developed, we recognize the need to

collaborate with other provinces and the federal government.

The Prince Edward Island energy strategy is also aligned with the provincial climate change strategy and that, as well, will impact what Islanders are doing. The energy strategy will focus on five key areas to direct our energy future: energy efficiency and conservation, power generation and management, energy storage, biomass, and heating and transportation.

We are committed to reducing the effect energy has on Islanders' budgets, but at the same time we are equally committed to reducing the impact energy has on the Island environment. That is the kind of energy policy I am prepared to support.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party, speaking to the amendment.

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

Taxes are always an awkward and difficult thing for politicians to talk about, and with good reason. Constituents, voters, Islanders, are concerned about taxes. They are concerned for a number of very good reasons. We pay some very high taxes here in Prince Edward Island and Islanders want to know a few things about the way we spend their money. They want to know that the taxes that government collects, that that is done in an equitable way, because sometimes Islanders see their neighbours and people in the media avoiding taxes or apparently not paying their fair share when some Islanders, who perhaps don't have the same opportunities, have no way of avoiding taxes. That hurts, and that's difficult and that's hard for them to understand.

They also want to know that the taxes that are collected are spent wisely, and that's also an area where many Islanders have lost faith. They look at the Bell Aliant contract, for example, or egaming or loan write-offs, all of these things we have talked about just on this very day, and they wonder whether the taxes they are giving to government to hold and use effectively and carefully or if that is indeed the case.

I think, also, Islanders want to know that taxation policy makes sense and that's where I'm getting to the heart of the amendment to this motion. It's as wrong for government to not apply a tax when it is called for as it is to apply a tax when it's not necessary or needed. In this case it's quite clear that – I mean economics 101 tells us that pricing has a direct effect on behaviour, and to have a taxation policy on energy which is incoherent or does not obviously encourage Islanders to do the right thing is confusing. We have here in this province, I would put forward, an incoherent tax policy when it comes to energy.

We heard this morning from the Premier that we're not going to remove the HST on oil and yet we're going to implement a carbon tax. Now, those two things are not compatible. If we are going to encourage Islanders to do the right thing and to reduce our carbon footprint here in Prince Edward Island both individually and collectively, then we have to have a coherent tax policy that makes sense. I don't know how this is all going to play out, of course, and I want to echo the comments of one of the members in this House who stated very clearly that we have to be concerned about the welfare of low-income Islanders, and absolutely we do. I recognize that a large portion of many low-income Islanders' money goes on heating their homes and getting gas for their cars. We have to make sure that these people aren't unduly compromised because of tax policy.

But a tax policy that negates itself in two different ways just does not make sense. It's not so much the size of government and the amount of tax that we collect, it's the shape of government and how that tax is collected and how it's spent that concerns me. In this motion, which I absolutely will support, it's quite clear that we need to incentivize Islanders to do the right thing and we will do that if we have a coherent, sensible tax policy.

If we remove HST from green heating sources we are incentivizing Islanders individually and personally to do the right thing. Those who have invested in wood pellet stoves, for example, or solar panels or even small wind generators, and there are a few Islanders who have done that, currently are being punished for that good choice, for

that environmental choice, for that choice for the welfare of their children, whereas those people who have not made that move are not encouraged to do so.

We need on a personal basis to adjust our taxation policy so that Islanders are incented to do the right thing and, on a collective basis – and I believe this was mentioned by somebody in the House earlier today – that it's not that the cost of climate change can be avoided. They will be paid. The costs of climate change are real and they will be paid. They will be paid by us in reparations, whether that's building new bridges or infrastructure or armouring our shores. Those are all costs related to climate change and we must pay them, or more shamefully, they will be borne by our children. If we do not pay for it now, our children will pay for it later. Unfortunately politics and governments have become accustomed and comfortable with passing on the payments, whether they be payments in terms of debt, debt accumulation, or in this case payments of costs yet to be accrued, costs associated with climate change.

Doing nothing does not mean that we pay nothing. We will be paying something, we will just pay for it indirectly or again, more shamefully, we will cause our children to pay for it indirectly. A price on carbon will cause us to do the right thing. It will cause us, individually and collectively, to move our energy habits in the right direction, and we have to do this in order to stop wrecking the planet for our children.

We have in the works in this province a climate change strategy, a climate change mitigation strategy, an energy strategy all coming down the pipeline, and now we have a pan-Canadian energy strategy as well. All of these things can create jobs, as the Premier said this morning, on Prince Edward Island. We can keep the money in Prince Edward Island. Alternative energies, green energies, are growing at about 18% year upon year around the world. That's an astonishing – there's no other part of the economy that I'm aware of that is growing at such a dramatic rate – 18% and providing millions and millions of new, good-paying jobs. We could and we should be a part of that here on Prince Edward Island. I believe that the mitigation strategy and the energy

strategy and the pan-Canadian strategy are all moving us in the right direction.

We can protect ourselves from global fluctuations in marketplaces, we can protect ourselves from oil prices which are draining an enormous amount of money out of our economy here, and we can protect our Island from the ravages of climate change, but it has to be done with a coherent tax policy, and that will be done by adopting such measures as Motion No. 47 and the amendment to it.

One last point. It has been mentioned earlier this evening already that air source heat pumps are the favored method of moving towards a green energy use here on the Island, and indeed that is an enormous step forward from straight heat radiation. It is three or four times more efficient than that and it is certainly cleaner than burning fossil fuels, and that's great. However, we have to remember that every time we install a heat pump we are increasing the overall load that we use here in the province. Just two days ago we had the highest load ever on Prince Edward Island – 258 megawatts was registered here on Prince Edward Island. We're not in the depths of winter here, we're not at -25 temperatures. It was -3 outside and we reached 258 megawatts, the highest ever. Inevitably that's going to go up.

Shifting to electricity is great, but only if the electricity that we get comes through clean sources. Makes no sense to shift if that electricity is produced by coal-burning stations in New Brunswick, for example.

Yes, we are doing the right thing. This motion pushes us in the right direction and I will support it, but we have an awful long way to go before we have a coherent policy here on Prince Edward Island that is pushing Islanders to do the right thing.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Wait for a moment for the podium as well.

It's a pleasure for me to rise and speak on the amendment of this motion that was brought forward. I just want to read it so everybody can think about it for just a minute. The amendment which would be inserted before the operative clause states, and I quote:

And whereas the Standing Committee on Education and Economic Development recommended in its report to the House yesterday "that government consider extending an exemption to the provincial portion of the HST to energy efficient forms of home heating."

There were many questions asked today in the Legislative Assembly to the Premier with regards to his intent on adding HST to heating fuel. Not once did the Premier directly answer that question, so it's quite obvious the intent is there that this tax will be added.

I've always been of the opinion that if we lived in a climate where you were utilizing a product as a luxury, then there's really not an issue with taxing that. But when we live in a climate such as we have here, and whether you're using pellets, electricity, propane, wood, or in this case home heating fuel, oil, to heat your home, it's not a luxury, it's a necessity.

I just find it's completely wrong to add an additional tax burden on to something that is a necessity, something that literally we need to survive, at least six, or seven, eight months of the year here in Prince Edward Island.

You only have to look at social media this evening after *Compass* aired and it's essentially many forms of social media went viral tonight with the reports that there is a carbon tax coming. For months – I'd say for a couple of years now – this is the talk, that there will be a carbon tax. There hasn't been a lot of discussion publicly until now because people are finally equating that a carbon tax is going to mean that government is going back into your pocket, back into your wallet, and taking more of your hard-earned tax dollars.

The Premier during the last election stated in a press release that Islanders expect and deserve a government that is fiscally responsible and that makes achievable commitments that won't result in tax increases or cuts to services or employment. That statement didn't hold out too long because the Premier continued on with increasing fees and services as well as the HST. Under this administration taxes have skyrocketed for the past 10 years.

For example, in 2008, the total estimate revenues of licenses and permits were \$18.2 million. Yet in 2016 the estimated revenue earned from these fees increased from 18.2 million to 31.1 million. The total for tax revenues in 2008 was estimated at approximately \$664.1 million while in 2016 total taxes raised were estimated from, again, 664.1 million to now 902 million. I don't think anybody's salaries are going up that dramatically anywhere here on Prince Edward Island. Another 30 million is expected to be raised as a result of the 1% increase in HST.

Islanders are literally tapped out and more and more are living cheque to cheque. More and more are utilizing our food banks. PEI has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the country. We also have the lowest salaries. Islanders need any break they can get when it comes to reducing their costs which are outweighing their earnings, and a rebate on their source of heating would certainly go a long way.

This government has taken and taken from Islanders' earnings, now it's time for government to give back. The current Premier during the last election said, and again I quote: As our province's fiscal position improves a Liberal government will work toward removing the HST from electricity.

Islanders are waiting for that promise to be fulfilled, but I doubt if one iota of effort has gone into that initiative since this government was elected. However, we do know that electricity rates are continuing to climb upwards by 260 per month.

We believe not only should the HST be exempted from electricity, which can also be used to heat homes, but it should be removed from all sources of heat like solar,

wind, geothermal, wood pellets, wood, and heat pumps. I believe we should follow Nova Scotia which exempts all forms of house hold energy from the provincial portion of its HST.

Not only is this tax unfair to residents, it promotes the use of oil which is a fossil fuel and an emitter of high levels of carbon. It seems contradictory and hypocritical to promote carbon-based fuels as a form of heat while asking Islanders at the same time to pay a carbon tax and reduce their carbon footprint.

This government should be providing incentives to Islanders to get off oil rather than seducing them to stay on oil as a heat source. The predictions are that the price of oil and gas will increase again this winter.

I had a great conversation with one of my constituents this past Monday at a coffee shop over in Stratford. The gentleman's name is Lennie Currie. Lennie has just been named the energy champion for the town of Stratford. It's a new initiative that our council has put in place. Essentially, they took public nominations for a period of time and Lennie was, without a doubt, the resounding winner of this award.

A number of years ago Mr. Currie – because he's very forward thinking and educated and continues to educate himself on many issues around energy efficiency – installed solar panels on his house. I remember having the conversation with him at the time when he did it and he was asking me if there were any incentives in place provincially to help him do that. Unfortunately, the answer I had to give him was no, because there was not. In any event, Lennie went forward and installed these solar panels on his house and he's reduced his carbon footprint exponentially, to the point where he's actually on some days able to feed some power back into the grid.

I really think that that's where this government should be looking. I think that we need to set up incentives, not just to be taxing constantly, but to help people make their homes more energy efficient. Now I know there was talk today that there will be a program set up, but the unfortunate thing is with many of the other programs that government puts in place there's a certain

cap. Once that money is gone – and it will be gone like that – then, unfortunately, you're SOL.

I think if we're serious about reducing our carbon footprint we really need to get serious about putting incentives in place. Again, there used to be a credit in place, an incentive, to buy an energy efficient vehicle. What happened to that? This government took that away as well. You just have to talk to the dealerships here on Prince Edward Island. There's very few of those vehicles being sold here on Prince Edward Island anymore because that incentive is taken away.

We just saw IRAC approve a 0.5 cents per litre increase in the price of gasoline that brought the minimum price for regular gasoline well over a dollar. This likely means more taxes for government, but unfortunately it also means higher costs for Islanders.

Islanders keep seeing their taxes go up, but unfortunately their wages are not matching those increases. They are falling further and further behind.

In closing, I would ask that hon. members of this Legislative Assembly support our motion and this amendment and help Islanders to stay warm this winter on other forms of heating sources without being penalized for their efforts to save costs and to save our environment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, are you ready for the question on the amendment?

Mr. Aylward: Madam Speaker, the mover to close?

Speaker: No, not on the amendment.

Mr. Aylward: Oh, sorry. The amendment, sorry.

Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment signify by saying 'aye'.

We're going to have the amendment read.

Clerk: The amendment is to insert the following clause before the operative clause, that's the first operative clause:

And whereas the Standing Committee on Education and Economic Development recommended in its report to the House yesterday "that government consider extending an exemption to the provincial portion of the HST to energy efficient forms of home heating".

Speaker: Thank you.

All those voting in favour of the amendment signify by saying 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: All those voting against the amendment signify by saying 'nay'.

The amendment is carried.

Hon. members, we'll now go back to the debate on the motion as amended.

The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. R. Brown: I have my own podium.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Oh, the days of opposition. I remember them. You can say anything, promise anything, and never have to live up to it –

Mr. Myers: You still do it.

Mr. R. Brown: No, no, you guys are doing it good.

At least when we were in opposition for any motion that we would bring up to cut taxes or to cut things or to cut taxes we'd always have, in our hands, where we were going to find the savings to cut the taxes. Then, these hon. members, no savings, they're talking about nowhere to cut, are you talking about cutting the hospitals? Are you talking about cutting the schools –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) you mean you and Robert Ghiz?

Mr. R. Brown: – are you talking about cutting the schools? It's a \$10 million expenditure you're talking about –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) loans.

Mr. R. Brown: It's a \$10 million expenditure you're talking about over there –

Mr. Myers: That's lawyers.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) loans.

Mr. R. Brown: It's easier to say it when you're over there, to say cut her.

Ms. Compton: You (Indistinct) have \$20 million in HST.

Mr. Aylward: Just (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: All they have to say is get up and say – where are you going to cut the money that you want to cut the taxes? If you want to govern you had better be able to govern. You just can't govern on one side of the ledger –

Mr. MacKay: (Indistinct) follow the rules.

Mr. R. Brown: You just can't govern on one side of the ledger.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Hon. members –

Mr. R. Brown: Pat Binns tried to govern on one side of the ledger, and look at the trouble –

Speaker: Hon. members –

Mr. R. Brown: – we got on –

Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning has the floor.

Mr. R. Brown: The Member from Souris-Elmira said putting people to work, and there are a lot of houses out there that need a lot of repairs. That's what the member from Souris was saying. We should be out there helping each other repair our houses, and we should be creating jobs.

What better way to create jobs, and at the same time help Islanders rebuild their houses, make them more energy efficient? We're doing two things. We're doing it like the 1970s when a lot of individuals on Prince Edward Island didn't own their own homes. An idea came up, co-op housing. You look around Charlottetown, there is a tremendous amount of co-op housing that has been built around here. That's Islanders helping Islanders build their homes.

That's what kind of program we're looking at here with the carbon tax. If anybody wants to deny that climate change is not here, they just have to look out the window, or look out the door, as the member from Souris said. The banks are washing away, the water is coming up to the house. He has indicated that he already has his lifejacket on in his house because he sees the water coming up. It's a serious situation. If he thinks he can avoid it by just looking out the window and staring there and waiting for somebody else to come along and solve your problems, he's wrong.

The economy of Prince Edward Island has been doing good. As the Premier has said: We spend –

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct) 4,000 jobs.

Mr. R. Brown: – we spend \$400 million a year –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Aylward: (Indistinct) on lawyers.

Mr. R. Brown: – importing energy –

Mr. Myers: Not just lawyers.

Mr. R. Brown: Let's say if we could just set a limit on 10% energy efficiency, or reducing that by 10%, \$40 million Islanders would be saving, \$40 million wouldn't be leaving Prince Edward Island to the big oil companies or to the big energy generators off-Island, \$40 million would be available to the economy of Prince Edward Island to be spent in the economy of Prince Edward Island, which would equate to \$120 million of economic activity, if we could drop our energy costs by 10% from \$400 million. Just

think what we could do with that, think what kind of Prince Edward Island we'd have.

The home repair program, it would phenomenal. As the member from Souris indicated, there are a lot of houses that need to be fixed out there.

Talking about electricity and why HST was not put on electricity when it was being thought of. I have to remind this House one of the greatest things on Prince Edward Island ever happened during that time. The first time in the history of Prince Edward Island, the first time a reduction, a big reduction in electric power rates, ever occurred on Prince Edward Island –

Mr. Myers: Oh, go on.

Mr. R. Brown: – a 14% reduction –

Mr. Myers: Oh, go on.

Mr. R. Brown: – in electric rates. Fourteen per cent, people said it couldn't be done. People said: You're crazy. It would never happen –

Mr. Myers: You got kicked out of Cabinet right after.

Mr. R. Brown: – never happen, but we pursued that, and we pursued a rate reduction, and we did achieve a 14% reduction in power rates.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: So if you want to know –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: – I'll leave the (Indistinct) for you –

Leader of the Opposition: Up 2.3 last year (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: If that 14% decrease didn't happen we'd almost see a 20% differential now because of the inflation rates on that 14%.

That's great news for Prince Edward Islanders. We took an approach there on looking out for Islanders first, and in

essence, we saved energy costs that were going up on Prince Edward Island.

I think the total savings was \$30 million to \$40 million we saved that wasn't leaving Prince Edward Island. That was money that was used back here on Prince Edward Island instead of sending it to the big power companies away. We used it here on Prince Edward Island that generated a lot of good economic activity.

With that money we were allowed to go out and help Islanders fix up their homes and energy retrofits. Again, that helped our economy. Look at our economy over that term that we had the energy efficiency programs working and we spent the money helping Islanders fix their houses and helping Islanders get jobs to fix those houses. Our economy grew over those years. Our total employment income grew over these years, and it works.

These things work. When we take – we save money and we reinvest that money back into Islanders. That's what the program is. To just come out on the Christmas season with a resolution – we had Santa here a few minutes ago – and thinking that tax policy can be done on the fly without knowing all the implications is wrong. That gets so many governments into trouble.

What happens? They're over there complaining all the time about our interest rates being over \$100 million. If we did that kind of taxing policy, just cut, cut, cut, Reaganomics. If we did that we'd see where we are. We'd be spending over half our budget in interest rates paying it out to somebody from off Prince Edward Island. Tax policy has got to be balanced.

These hon. members are not balanced.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: I don't mean that way –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: Fiscally be balanced. They're not balanced.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: If you want to come up with ideas, you have to come up with the two sides of –

Speaker: Hon. members, the minister has the floor.

Thank you.

Mr. R. Brown: Any good accountant would tell you it's a double-ledger system, there's two sides to the ledger there, but they're only working on one side of the ledger.

Mr. Myers: Well, we don't have PNP to work with.

Mr. R. Brown: Madam Speaker, but if we – the program that's coming in place, and you will see it when it's revealed with the federal government.

First of all, we had to work out, or the government had to work out, its deal with the federal government. The carbon tax is coming. It's coming no matter what. It's a federal-imposed tax. Either we can sit back and say we're not going to take it, or we're entitled to it and we take it –

An Hon. Member: Negotiate.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) same thing to my face.

Mr. R. Brown: No, I will know that you're back.

We have to work on a full set program of both taxation and implementations of policies, and as the Leader of the Third Party indicated, tax policy drives choice. If you have the right tax policy you have the right choices to make. If we want to reduce our carbon footprint we have to reduce people using those types of energy, and what is one of the best ways of reducing energy cost –

Mr. Trivers: Take the HST off (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: - is taxing it or charging a fee on it. All that money is committed to going back into the economy of Prince Edward Island, and by going back into the economy of Prince Edward Island it's going to grow the economy of Prince Edward Island.

Now that my hon. member's back –

Mr. LaVie: You believe that?

Mr. R. Brown: Indication was earlier – and I'll be repeating myself here – the indication was that houses need to (Indistinct) be repaired –

Mr. LaVie: Premier, did you write that note?

Mr. R. Brown: Jobs have to be created, and the program we're proposing is that jobs will be (Indistinct) created, and homes will be fixed up. A better way to do things. Or you could be looking out the – and as one hon. member said over there, the tides are rising – or you could be looking out the window and seeing the water coming up to your window and have your lifejacket on and waiting for it to come in the window, or do something about it.

Mr. LaVie: See it every spring.

Mr. R. Brown: Any good person would know, any good sailor would know, if your boat is leaking you plug the hole. You plug the hole, but they let the water rush right in. They let the water rush right in and they wait for somebody to come and rescue them. Instead of plugging the hole, they wait till somebody comes rescue them. They always want somebody.

They know that, because I understand their boat went aground off Georgetown and they had a leak in her and they didn't patch the hole –

Mr. Myers: Brudenell.

Mr. R. Brown: Off Brudenell.

Speaker: Hon. member, you're speaking to the motion as amended, right?

Mr. Myers: No one knows what he's (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: I'm using metaphors to describe how bad their tax policies are.

Anyway, I can't be supporting the motion before us tonight because any good tax policy and any good tax planning requires a plan. This is not a plan you're putting

forward tonight, the opposition is putting forward tonight.

Mr. LaVie: You fellows haven't got a plan.

Mr. R. Brown: You're not putting a plan forward tonight. You're putting nothing forward to help climate change. You're just putting (Indistinct) a resolution to give more money back that is required –

Mr. Aylward: (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: That is required. Tax policy's being used here to change motivations here, and that's what we're (Indistinct) doing. I'd rather wait for the plan, review the plan, and you'll see it's a good plan, and I'm assured that you'll vote for it.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Anybody else like to speak to the motion as amended?

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, speaking to the motion as amended.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Do you want the podium?

Mr. LaVie: Yes, could I have the podium, please?

An Hon. Member: Get his podium.

Mr. LaVie: No, it's too small.

It's great that, Madam Speaker, that we can come in here and we can all speak to these motions, and nothing will be done after we vote on this motion.

We'll have an HST and we'll have an HST rise, and we'll have a carbon tax and we'll have a carbon tax rise after that, and people are not getting nothing in return. They're not getting nothing in return.

Mr. Aylward: Further in debt.

Mr. LaVie: They're going further in debt, especially the most vulnerable, and I see it

every day, and you fellows see it. I'm not the only one in my district that sees it.

We've got to start speaking up for the most vulnerable people on Prince Edward Island. We've got start that today, and we've got to stop talking and show some action. We've got to create jobs. We've got to create industry here. I hear the minister from economic development, how much he does for Prince Edward Island. We're still on the minus side. I'm here for five years and we're still on the minus side, and we were on the minus side when (Indistinct) started. When you fellows came into government you had a surplus. You had a surplus when you came into government.

Mr. R. Brown: We created it.

Mr. LaVie: Didn't create it, and you weren't long in taking her on the minus side. What do you do? You say you're going to balance a budget. You raise the HST, you bring in a carbon tax. That's how you're going to balance a budget, on the back of Islanders. It's going to cost them. You're not only reaching into the pockets, you've got the holes right to the knees. The holes are in the pockets. I'm serious. There's people out there in need, and all we do is talk about it. There's people going to school hungry, and we talk about it. Let's show some action.

Mr. J. Brown: (Indistinct) breakfast program

Mr. LaVie: It's great for the breakfast program. But if people were out there and people were working and not being taxed to death, they could afford their breakfast. Make people proud. People want to have their own breakfast at their own kitchen table, not at the school. Make the people proud. Give them work. Let's create jobs.

As the Leader of the Green Party said, with green energy there's lots of ways to create. Let's look for some of that and create it right here on PEI and create jobs. Let's create something here on PEI.

Mr. Myers: For once.

Mr. LaVie: For once. Let's just do it and create some jobs for people. Let's spread the thing out across Prince Edward Island. Let's send some stuff west, let's send some stuff

east, and get the people working. That's how you'll get your tax returns, from the people that are working, not taxing them.

An Hon. Member: True, so true.

Mr. LaVie: So true. (Indistinct) get the people to work and that's when you'll get your taxes because people pay taxes.

That's all I had to say on this issue. I've been here for five years talking about this. Let's show some action. Let's show some action for the most vulnerable people on Prince Edward Island. Give them work. If you're paying taxes you won't mind because you know you're making money if you're paying taxes. People don't mind paying taxes if they know where the tax dollars are going.

People love to buy a turkey. They don't want to be given a turkey. They want to buy a turkey. They don't want to send the kids to school hungry. They want to feed them home.

In closing, let's just for once stop talking and take some action.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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

I know we only have a couple of minutes. I just wanted to make a couple of comments because when you read through the motion, and we are – we can have a really good discussion on this, because it's a really important topic. It seems like we have differing opinions on what direction we should take on this topic.

But there are a couple of clauses in here that I like and some that I don't like, but where Prince Edward Islanders are seeking alternative methods of heating their homes due to high oil costs and in efforts to try to protect the environment, this is a very fair statement. That's for sure. And whereas this government has stated its commitment to the reduction of the province's carbon footprint,

is a very true statement. I agree fully with those.

The operative clause words for three quarters of it is fine, and that's what I think we need to do, and that's what the discussion should be about. We should maybe take a whole afternoon and discuss this sort of thing, which says:

“Therefore be it resolved that this Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to encourage Prince Edward Islanders to utilize more environmentally friendly types of home heat...”

Agree on that. It's the tax part that throws me off. When we broaden the tax exemption on oil heat to include all other sources of heat, if they're not reducing our carbon footprint, it's like an encouragement to use more oil or to use other ones that really doesn't solve the issue that we have in front of us.

But this is the thing we really need to do. We really need to lower that carbon footprint. We need to get off oil and some of these other things and we need to have a good discussion on just how we match, like the hon. member said, our tax policy with lowering our GHGs.

We should be talking about exemptions for greener energy, not tax exemptions to do the same old thing, and I think if we ever actually got to a motion like that that maybe we all draw it up ourselves and decide what we should talk about on this. Because this issue is coming down the pipe for us so quickly it's not funny.

Maybe we need to come together instead of cut taxes to solve the problem. Let's talk about incentives. I think that's where the difference is and maybe to some degree we're talking all the same thing, but we need

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: People can't afford it.

Mr. McIsaac: We have to have taxes to build roads and run the hospitals and that sort of thing, but we need to have some incentives to get people off producing GHGs and that's where I think we really need to

go. For that reason I can't support the motion the way it is, but I would love to continue the discussion on getting exactly to where we really need to be.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Members, are you ready for the question on the motion as amended?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Standing vote?

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Yeah, you can. I was just wondering if there was anyone else who needed to speak.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition to close debate on the motion as amended.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I respect everybody's views and opinions on this, but we're talking about climate change and we're talking about switching people over to green forms of energy, which I support. It's fine to say that we're going to give them incentives, but they have to have the money and the funds to support the incentive in the first place, and the government is failing to do that. If we take the tax off, then that means they can use that money in the purchasing of equipment or whatever to turn that way.

It's fine to say we have programs to support retrofits and home energy audits and all that kind of stuff, but if the people haven't got the money in their pocket to make the changes after the audit or to switch that way, then what's the sense? We're spinning our wheels because they're not going to have the funds to do it.

I'm looking presently to converting the house over to a pellet boiler, which is a big investment. I can't see how anybody in a low-income bracket or whatever could ever afford to do that with the cost of some of these things. Government has to be ready to help them. By taking the tax off it is a help. You can sit there and you say the government needs money to run. Well, government has got to stop wasting money.

Government has got to stop writing debts off and loans, and that's a fact. It's not just a cash cow where a person comes in in a fog bank and gets money and says: Here, don't worry about it, we'll just write it off for you.

It's fine to say that you made \$16 million in interest. Well, yeah, you might have made \$16 million in interest, but you wrote \$15 million off.

At the end of the day we must make sure that the people that need the money get the money. We must ensure and this motion does that, it supports low-income families to give them the incentive or help them retrofit their house.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. members, a standing vote has been requested.

Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please ring the bells to call the members?

[The bells were rung]

Mr. LaVie: Madam Speaker, opposition is ready for the vote.

Mr. J. Brown: Madam Speaker, government members are ready for the vote.

Speaker: I would ask all those voting against the motion as amended to please rise.

Clerk: The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, the hon. Premier, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, the hon. Minister of Communities, Land and Environment, the hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, and the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Speaker: I would ask all those voting for the motion as amended to please rise.

Clerk: The hon. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Opposition House Leader, the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, and the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Speaker: Hon. members, the motion as amended has been defeated.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Opposition would now like to call Motion No. 81 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (E. Doiron): Motion No. 81.

The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche and Government House Leader moves, seconded by the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque and Opposition House Leader, the following motion:

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island held legislative sessions exclusively in Province House from January 26, 1847 until November 27, 2014;

AND WHEREAS Province House was locally designed, built and furnished, reflecting the dedication, skill and accomplishment of Island craftspeople and has been described in the Royal Gazette as "...an honour to the Island, commanding a feeling of pride and satisfaction in all who entered";

AND WHEREAS Province House is widely recognized as one of the finest parliamentary buildings in the Commonwealth, and continues to have a special place in the hearts and minds of Prince Edward Islanders as a powerful symbol of parliamentary democracy, provincehood and our right to self government and determination;

AND WHEREAS Province House is in dire need of extensive structural and conservation work yet remains as the seat of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island;

AND WHEREAS Province House is owned by the Province of Prince Edward Island, a 1974 Memorandum of Agreement between the Governments of Canada and Prince Edward Island assign responsibility for the structural maintenance and repair of Province House to the Government of Canada;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Legislative Management, pursuant to the Rules of the Legislative Assembly, is charged with matters associated with the provision of facilities and services for the functioning of the Legislative Assembly and other matters necessary for the efficient and effective operation and management of the Legislative Assembly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island request that the Governments of Canada and Prince Edward Island work collaboratively during the conservation of Province House to ensure that it is completed in a thorough and comprehensive manner, respecting the traditions and Island craftsmanship so proudly displayed during the time of construction;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government of Prince Edward Island, through the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, participate in all meetings associated with the conservation of Province House to ensure that provincial and Legislative Assembly interests are well represented.

AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy provide quarterly updates to the Standing Committee on Legislative Management on progress made on the conservation and restoration of Province House and on the installation of facilities and services necessary for the reestablishment of a modern and functioning Legislature at Province House;

AND THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that structural and conservation work be completed without unnecessary delay allowing the Legislative Assembly to return to Province House for the conduct of provincial legislative business as soon as possible.

Speaker: We will now move to the mover to open debate.

The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Could I please use the mini-podium, please?

It gives me great pleasure to rise and move this motion, seconded by the hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque. I believe this speaks to the importance of this motion and the respect that all members of this Assembly have for Province House.

As MLAs we never forgot how we felt when we first walked into the Legislative Assembly. As a new MLA in 2007 I felt the sense of awe and honour as I took my place on the floor of the Chamber in Province House. I know all of my colleagues felt the same way.

I do think it's important to acknowledge the work of the Legislative Assembly staff, including the Clerk, to make the transition to this building as smooth as possible. We all recognize these are not ideal circumstances, but everyone has done a tremendous job to make this work as well as it is. That being said, I know we are all looking forward to the Legislature returning to Province House.

While there have been a lot of changes to the building over the years, including the significant project underway, Province House's place in the history of our country remains steadfast.

The cornerstone of the building was laid in 1843, and legislators met for the first time in the new Chambers in 1847.

Province House holds an important place in Canada's formation and development. In 1864 the Charlottetown Conference was held in Province House leading to the formation of Canada.

Province House continues to inform and educate Islanders, Canadians, and visitors alike of our country's history. Province House was designated a National Historic Site in Canada in 1973.

Given the significance of Province House to our country's history and our democratic future, it is important that all members of this Assembly are kept informed of the restoration work and the progress being made. While Parks Canada is responsible for the work, it is important that the province or Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy work collaboratively to ensure the interests of the province and the Legislative Assembly are well represented. By providing quarterly updates to the Standing Committee on Legislative Management all members of this Legislative Assembly will be kept aware of the progress and the restoration work.

While we recognize this work is a significant undertaking, we want to ensure that it is completed without unnecessary delay to allow the Legislative Assembly to return to Province House as soon as possible. I'm confident that all members of this Assembly feel the same and I am proud to move this motion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque to second the motion.

Mr. MacKay: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and support government's motion that calls for the continued restoration of Province House.

I came across a quote that I believe best describes my feelings about the importance of preserving history in general, and of preserving the history of our province in particular. The quote was made by William J. Murtagh, author of *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1988, p. 168. It states:

The past is not the property of historians. It is a public possession. It belongs to anyone who is aware of it, and it grows by being shared. It sustains the whole society, which

always needs the identity that only the past can give.

I believe Prince Edward Island, holds a very special place in the history of our nation. I also believe that as members of this esteemed Legislative Assembly we have an obligation to ensure that our role in history is preserved and protected, not only for Prince Edward Islanders but for all Canadians.

I believe Province House is symbolic of the beginnings of our great nation, of the vision and voices of those who came before us. To allow that vision to fail would be to rob our children and our future generations of a part of their past, of their sense of belonging to a greater society.

If we allowed Province House to crumble to the ground we would be destroying the legacy of those who not only built our province, but built a dream that became Canada. We would be destroying an important component of the identity of all Canadians. To me, at least, it would be like wiping out the memory of parents from their children. It would have a profound impact on their futures.

Province House to the people is a symbol of democracy, freedom, and security. Even its construction has had so many stories to tell and information to reveal in terms of the lives of our ancestors who lived and worked in our province, even before Province House rose from the ground.

Province House, as the seat of government and as a tourist attraction, also contributes to our city's unique culture and the economy of our province.

I recall reading about the restoration in 1979 when workers found old gas pipes used to fuel gas-burning lamps and horsehair in the walls. Life then would certainly have held some interesting challenges.

Parks Canada indicates that their primary role is to protect and interpret this important site to Canadians for all time. But as we have stated previously, there is a price to be paid for everything we do, and in this case the price of doing nothing, in my mind, would be just too high and a tragic loss. As it is often said, and I am not sure who said it

first: It's hard to know where you're going when you don't know where you've been.

Our heritage buildings bring to life the lives of those who went before us. They inspire us and excite our imaginations. Province House is critical to the development of the roots and growth of our country and unites our people as Canadians. Its restoration is critical to the foundation.

As someone said, and I'm not sure who said it: It's hard to know who you are when you don't know where you came from.

I support this motion and I urge all members to support it, and hopefully if that takes place we can see the restoration of this great building take effect.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to thank the members for this motion. I had the honour during my tenure as deputy speaker to sit on the Legislative Management Committee that held public meetings when you, in fact, Madam Speaker, were the Speaker. We had many presentations given to us about the importance of preserving our historic site and the importance that it means to Islanders in general.

The fact that we now have an intergovernmental motion on this issue is evidence of the seriousness of which we view the upkeep and restoration and Province House. This is an historic site tremendously important to many Canadians as the location of the Charlottetown Conference in 1864. First and foremost, this is the seat of government within Prince Edward Island, and the place where we come to represent the views of Islanders and to carry out the affairs of our province.

The province has known for years that Province House needed significant repairs. A couple of years ago my department committed to working with Parks Canada toward carrying out this needed work. A

report by Taylor Hazell Architects received on January 23rd, 2014, provided strong direction on how to stabilize the building and prepare it for its important role in the 2014 celebrations. That fall we opted to temporarily move out of the historic building so that the restoration project could proceed.

In January of 2015 the Office of the Speaker, and the Clerk of the Legislature operations, were moved to 197 Richmond Street. The Pope Room in the Coles Building in which we now stand has been retrofitted to house the Legislature. This has been a significant job. It is expected that the restoration work for Province House could take as long as five years and the costs are considerable as well.

The province received a stakeholder update on September 15th, 2016, advising that the Government of Canada has now committed \$41 million in funding for the restoration of Province House National Historic Site. My department will continue to press the federal government to provide appropriate levels of funding to carry out a complete restoration to ensure continued, long safe term use of this historic building.

This is a complicated project. Province House is in the process of being restored. By that I don't mean we are restoring it as the original historic structure, but also that restoration is being carried out in a way that allows this building to function as a safe, accessible, modern working home of legislation and debate.

We want to afford future legislators and guests the kind of facility that will allow government to be effective, enable legislators to carry out the business of the province, and will equip the Legislature in a way that benefits the dignity that our province deserves in its most important building.

My department is committed to ensuring the best outcome possible for Province House and to working closely with Parks Canada throughout the process of the restoration.

With that being said, there are some small factual errors within this motion. With those corrected I think we would have a motion that reflects the importance of Province

House, the serious challenge ahead of us, and the work ahead for Parks Canada and for the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

I will have copies to pass out to everyone, but what I'm proposing is an amendment. In the second resolved there is request that the Government of Prince Edward Island attends all meetings related to this project. However, this is a federally managed project with project-related meetings taking place in Halifax and Ottawa primarily. We would like to be included in these meetings, either physically or via telephone or video connection. I'd like to see that paragraph amended to read as follows:

And therefore be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island request the Government of Canada to continue to include the Government of Prince Edward Island through the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, as an invited participant in all meetings associated with the conservation of Province House in order to ensure that provincial and Legislative Assembly interests are well represented.

Additionally, in the next paragraph I would like to add the words "Government of Canada and Prince Edward Island" before the name of my department, and the words, "in cooperation with Parks Canada" after my department. This will make it clear that the federal government, along with my department, should have a role in providing the province with updates on the progress of this project.

I've prepared an amended version of that motion.

But I am pleased to support this motion and congratulate everyone for working together on it. It's a very important project, a true government partnership, and it is appropriate that we do the best we can to steer this project well and to keep the House informed, indeed, of its progress.

I have copies here –

Speaker: Do you have a seconder for your amendments?

Ms. Biggar: Seconded by the Premier.

Speaker: Do you have copies to distribute?

Ms. Biggar: Yes, I do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Would anybody else like to speak to the motion as amended? The amendment.

Would anybody like to speak to the amendment?

They're distributing the amendment now.

Mr. Myers: I'll speak after.

Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment signify by saying 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: Contrary minded?

The amendment is carried.

We'll now move on to speaking to the motion as amended.

The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I won't talk for very long. I know a number of years ago, while we were still sitting in the original building, I had the opportunity – I was on the Legislative Management committee – and I had an opportunity to go to Ottawa with the then-minister of transportation, Robert Vessey. We met with Gail Shea and the minister Aglukkaq who were quite open to conversation, one meeting. They came through with money to start the exploration work that happened over there.

I don't know if that's something that needs to happen again, to have somebody go and sit down with them, but I know the Harper government was quite willing to come to the table. So you would think that the great Justin Trudeau government would be more than willing to come and save us down here.

I think that back in a time when government didn't have great relations in Ottawa we were able to go to Ottawa and come up with the money. Now that we have four Liberal

MPs here, we have a Cabinet minister, we have a Liberal government in the province, it shouldn't be too hard to kind of muster up the steam to go to Ottawa and say: Look, finish what the Harper government started.

I think that, for us, it's important, it's an important piece of our history, and it's an important piece of this history of Canada that we can pass on. I'd like to see government assert their Ottawa relations to get this done.

We had no problem doing it when we were in opposition pulling to get us a meeting in Ottawa and pulling to make this happen. I think it's something that – I don't see any reason why we won't pass in this House tonight. I think it's something that we really need to push Ottawa on.

Like I said, back in the time of austerity, the Harper government came through in spades for us. Now that everything is Liberal and you guys all have buddies in Ottawa it's time for you to flex your muscles, I guess. I flexed mine, so now it's your turn.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Is there anybody else who would like to speak to the motion as amended.

Are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question!

Speaker: I'd like to go back to the mover to close debate on the motion as amended.

Are we all in agreement? All those in favour of the amendment signify by saying 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Indistinct) and I close debate on the motion and we'll call for a vote.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, I would ask all those voting in favour of the motion as amended to signify by saying 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Speaker: Contrary minded 'nay'.

The motion is carried and it is unanimous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Speaker: Hon. members, the hour has been called.

The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Alberton-Roseville, that this House adjourn until December 14th at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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