

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

Speaker (Casey): The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Welcome everyone here on the floor of the Legislature, and a remarkable crowd in the gallery considering the weather conditions, those watching from home or the Internet, in particular, those watching from York-Oyster Bed.

I want to make special welcome to three people who are here from Richmond: Alex Mayne, Ryan England, and Kent England, quite a trip. I appreciate you being here. Lisa Gallant, who is in from the South Shore Pharmacy. And Linda Jean Nicholson, who is here with the seniors' federation and a great contributor to genealogical work here in our province.

With the weather today and the wind anticipated we want to make special acknowledgement of our plow operators, school bus drivers, first responders, and everyone who is on the road, and urge them to be safe. For those who are on the road in a working capacity, to acknowledge what they do to make our province work under all conditions and to keep us safe.

Tomorrow was to be the last day of the CBC Feed a Family drive for the Christmas season, and that has been put over until Monday, so that's an extra weekend for people to contribute to that, and to acknowledge all of the people who have given to that and, of course, the staff who make such a success of it.

I especially want to recognize Receiver Coffee, a fine institution here on the same street, that has created a special blend of coffee and are giving, for the sale of each bag, \$10 towards the Feed a Family drive, more indication of the generosity of Prince Edward Islanders at Christmastime.

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 want to, first of all, give my thoughts to the firefighters who are out currently in the Meadow Bank-Clyde River area fighting a structural fire out there. This is a bad situation at a bad time, and I wish them all the luck, all firefighters who get called out during these situations.

Welcome everybody here today in the gallery, and everybody watching from Borden-Kinkora, and please have a safe drive home if you are driving.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

I'd like to welcome everybody to the gallery, particularly Lisa Gallant, whom we met just the other day, actually.

I'd also like to reiterate what the Premier said about the Feed a Family campaign here on Prince Edward Island. It's something that CBC does on an annual basis and it's such an important part of caring for our community here. They're doing, as always, a fantastic job.

I'd also like to mention, I heard a radio report yesterday, I think it was, that Stuart McLean, the host of Vinyl Café, is not doing so well in his battle against melanoma. He's taking a hiatus from his show in order to devote all of his energy to getting better and becoming well again. As a devotee of that show for years and years, I wish Stuart well. I'm sure everyone in this Assembly would join me in that.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Greetings to everyone watching at home today. I hope everyone has gotten home safe and sound and to be aware of the closures that are in place and to make sure that they travel safely home.

I want to recognize all of the Internet service providers that have weathered the storm to be with us here today. Especially one of my constituents, Mr. Kent England, who has Air Tech Communications Internet services, I know he's from Grand River. I hope he makes it home this afternoon. I doubt if I'll make Tyne Valley tonight, but I wish you safe travels, and it's great to have you in the Legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just wanted to rise today, as minister responsible for Internet services, and acknowledge Kent and his team from Air Tech Communications.

After Question Period I'll be delivering a statement on efforts to improve Internet service to rural Islanders. Kent's playing a big part of that in the western part of the province, and I certainly appreciate you coming in today on a day like today.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Chair: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone here today, and everyone watching at home in District 21, especially my daughter Sydney is home from school today. She wasn't feeling well, so she was going to watch on t.v. today.

I would also like to have a special shout-out to all our school bus drivers that get our kids home safe.

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 for me to rise as well today and to welcome everyone into the gallery today, and anyone that may be tuning in on the Internet or on EastLink.

I'd also be remiss if I didn't send a shout-out to CBC and the terrific job that they do with the Feed a Family program. Yesterday afternoon was the last stop for the turkey drive, and I was in attendance there. I'm very proud to say that there was well over 150 turkeys donated, and a considerable amount of monetary donations as well were made.

Just to touch on a couple of the groups that did donate a significant amount of turkeys: the PEI Nurses' Union; the Knights of Columbus; the Stratford Lions Club; the town of Stratford, of course; the North Shore Fishermen's Association also made a trip in.

I just want to send out a big shout-out to all these organizations that make Christmastime a little more special for those individuals, those families, that are in need.

In closing, I just want to let everybody know that, yes, it might be snowing out right now, it's starting to look a little bit more (Indistinct) Christmas, but I've just been sent a message in. I've been told that Paul Gormley had his umbrella taken away and a shovel put in his hand, so at least the sidewalks will be cleared, Madam Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise again in the House and welcome everyone here in the gallery, everyone watching at home in District 4

Belfast-Murray River, both online and on t.v. I hope that people are home safely or almost home safely and stay off the roads for the rest of the day.

I'd also like to recognize CBC and the hard work they do, but we can't mention CBC without talking about Toys for Tots and the Lions Club and Rotary Club, Kinsmen, the Knights of Columbus, and all the groups out there that make sure that people that are in need during Christmas are not forgotten. Congratulations to the hard work that everyone does to make sure that people have a good Christmas.

I just want to say last night I got the opportunity to go to the Christmas concert at Belfast Consolidated School. Lots of young people very excited about the holidays coming up, and there was lots of great entertainment from all the classes.

Lastly, at 2:00 p.m. today there is a tea for the seniors in Murray River, and unfortunately I won't be able to be there, but I just want to wish everyone there a very merry Christmas and I hope everyone has a great day.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a great privilege to rise and welcome everyone to the gallery. Especially welcome to Kent England and Ryan England and their staff, and other guests in the gallery.

I want to thank the Englands for taking a venture and putting some high-speed Internet in the Maximeville area. That's great, as the minister will talk to later.

I'd also like to say hello to everyone back in Evangeline-Miscouche, and a special hello to my mother-in-law, Mary Morse, who watches the proceedings when she can.

Also, wish everybody a safe travel home. I'm sure lots of things have been cancelled and everybody just needs to slow down, take

their time, and I wish everybody a safe travel home.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

An act of kindness yesterday just makes one love living on PEI (Indistinct). As I went through the coffee shop yesterday morning I paid for a coffee for a lady behind me, and when I got home last night from work there was a dozen cinnamon rolls sitting on the kitchen table waiting for me.

I'd just like to thank Anita Baker. I didn't know Anita was behind me in the drive-through when I was paying for her coffee, but when I got home last night and found a dozen cinnamon rolls I knew exactly where they came from.

Mr. R. Brown: Did you share them with your colleagues?

Mr. Myers: No, he didn't.

An Hon. Member: Saw the picture, but that was it.

An Hon. Member: Saw a picture.

Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. LaVie: I don't mind sharing, but when it comes to my food I'm not sharing.

Madam Speaker, on a serious note, there is a fire up in Clyde River way.

As a firefighter myself I've battled many a blaze in the winter months and my heart goes out to the firefighters, the homeowners any time of year, but especially this time of year right before Christmas. It'll be a very sad time for that family. To the family, to the firefighters, to all the first responders out there, my heart goes out to you as you work hard to fight that fire for that family.

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 all those people watching from District 18 Rustico-Emerald. It could be many today with all the snow coming down.

Of course, welcome everyone in the gallery. It's a good group, glad to see you're here. I'd especially like to welcome Lisa Gallant. I see her now and again at the Island Gymnastics Academy. Our kids do gymnastics together, sort of – in the same place anyhow.

Earlier today we had the Charlottetown Youth Retention Advisory Board come in and make a presentation to caucus. It was very enlightening and they had some great recommendations and very solutions-based approach. It was great to see, so I wanted to recognize Alex Youland, Laura MacDonald, and Zac Murphy who came in this morning.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I also want to recognize everybody in the gallery and everybody watching from home. I want to send a big thank you out to the city workers. There's a lot of city workers out there that do a tremendous job and make it a very difficult job removing the snow because there's a lot of cars in the way and a lot of obstacles, and they work all night, so I wanted to send a thank you out to them.

I also want to send a thank you out to the young kids of the Souris regional high school. Over the last few days they've been putting letters to the editor about advice to government and advice to society in general, and I must say they're a smart bunch of kids up there in Souris.

Mr. LaVie: They are.

Mr. R. Brown: Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Father Charles Gallant

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am very pleased to congratulate Father Charles Gallant.

Je suis très heureux de féliciter le Père Charles Gallant.

He was presented with the Order of Merit from St. Thomas Aquinas at the 97th annual general meeting. Coincidentally, Father Charles was born the same year as the St. Thomas Aquinas Society was created.

This award is presented annually to a person from the Acadian, Cajun, or Francophone community. This accolade goes to a recipient who has contributed in an exceptional way to the Island Acadian and Francophone life.

Father Gallant was brought up in a house that is located between Mont-Carmel and Egmont Bay.

Le Père Charles Gallant a grandi dans une maison située entre Mont-Carmel et Baie-Egmont.

This past summer Father Charles celebrated his 70th anniversary since being ordained into the priesthood. This milestone was celebrated at the Church of Notre Dame du Mont Carmel in July. He gave a moving testimonial that day in both French and English. Bishop Richard Grecco gave his expression of congratulations and thanks to Father Charles on his 70 years of priesthood in the form of a prayer.

I would like to send out congratulations to Father Charles Gallant on the Order of Merit and the 70th anniversary of his ordination.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Judy Lowe

Mr. Dumville: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to acknowledge the retirement of Judy Lowe. Judy is the owner-operator of National Music which has been serving the musical needs of Islanders for 27 years and is currently located in my district of West Royalty-Springvale.

National Music opened its doors back in September of 1989 at a store in the Sherwood shopping centre, but required more space and a larger facility. They found the perfect spot at 61 Trans-Canada Highway. A school of music was started there in 1992 and offered lessons to every level of musician. From the preschooler to the adult, anyone who wanted to learn how to play piano, violin, guitar, contacted the National Music school to help them on the way to learning an instrument.

Ms. Lowe has seen famous people come through her doors at National Music. She had a visit from John Allan Cameron, the godfather of Celtic music. Cecil McEachern, who played with Don Messer and the Islanders, stopped in regularly to buy strings for his violin until his death in 2014. As well, J.P. Cormier dropped in to say hi on his way to the Trailside Café.

At the age of 72 Judy has stated she wants to retire and spend her time with kids and grandchildren. As she has said, she is just waiting for the last waltz.

I hope you will all join in wishing Judy all the success in her next chapter of her life.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

North Rustico Christmas Lights

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's with great pleasure that I rise in this Christmas season and recognize James

Gallant in my district who's brought smiles to people's faces for many years with his Christmas light display. Indeed, I recognize all the residents of North Rustico that put so much work into their fantastic Christmas lights and decorations.

James has been bringing the joy and wonder of Christmas to children since 1989. James began the tradition as a memorial to his 16-year-old son who had been killed in a motor vehicle accident the year before.

James began doing the display so he'd not be overcome thinking of his son. It was a way to keep him busy and really keep his son off his mind.

The display of thousands of lights attracts thousands of people from across the island and beyond. For some it's a yearly tradition to make the venture to North Rustico to take in the lights. I understand you can even rent a limousine to see the lights in fine style.

Every year James Gallant adds onto his display of lights, and it's up to over 20,000 lights, and one of the biggest displays in the Maritimes.

The reason James continues to put up Christmas lights year after year is simply because of all the children who come. They seem so happy running around, is what he says.

For the past number of years James has set up a donation box for the Children's Wish Foundation and has raised over \$58,000 since 2005.

James is quick to deflect all praise for what he does. He is truly a genuine and kind person who simply cares.

I want to encourage everyone to take a trip up to North Rustico and see the Christmas lights, and make a donation to the Children's Wish Foundation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

St. John the Baptist Anglican Church in Crapaud

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

I had the great pleasure this summer, on August 21st, of attending the 175th anniversary service of the St. John the Baptist Anglican Church in Crapaud. The ‘small church with a big heart,’ as they know themselves to be, has played a critical role on the spiritual and social life of the Crapaud area since 1841.

The celebrants for the well-attended anniversary service were the resident Minister Margret Collins and the current Canadian Primate of the Anglican Church, the Most Rev. Archbishop Fred Hiltz, a man with actually has close family ties to this Island, and who delivered a delightful sermon. It was wish and it was charming and it was funny.

Construction for the English Church in Crapaud began in 1841, and was made possible by the Countess of Westmoreland, who gave 60 acres of land to the parish, and a gift of £200.

In 1901 the cornerstone for the current place of worship was laid and the first service was held there in 1902. This building was designed – and indeed, it was actually the first church designed on PEI – by the famed Island architect William Critchlow Harris, and it’s an example of his attention to beauty, function, and acoustics.

The long and illustrious life of the church continues because of parishioners like Connie MacKinnon, Eric Wilson, Harleigh MacLeod, Charlie Sherren, and Larry MacKinnon. It is through the dedication of people such as these that the vitality and the viability of the church will be assured well into the future.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Law Society of PEI re: Bill Dow (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On November the 16th the Premier was asked multiple times why he failed to report Bill Dow’s double-dipping to the law society.

Question to the Premier: Have you officially reported this matter to the law society yet?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, this question is a continuation of what we’ve seen in Question Period endeavouring to throw anybody possible under the bus.

But let me say that following those questions I did make inquiries of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism with whom Mr. Dow had the relationship.

The deputy minister wrote to the Auditor General on the 21st of October. The deputy minister also following my inquiries, and the inquiries made in this House, obtained a legal opinion on the question that was raised.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Egaming accountability (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So he did not contact the law society.

Question to the Premier: Why does there continue to be no consequences for this egaming scandal under your rule?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, the question of lawyers and having situations where they manage conflicts of

interest is not wrongdoing and it's not unusual.

The good lawyers and the best lawyers do this on an everyday basis, and they do that as part of their professional duty to their clients. It's not my role as attorney general to be the police person of Mr. Dow or others.

But I'm confident that the issue was raised with the deputy minister. The deputy minister was in correspondence with the Auditor General. I asked if she had any further information. She didn't. The deputy minister sought a legal opinion and I also understand, through officials, that Mr. Dow has himself contacted the law society.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Law Society of PEI re: Bill Dow (further)

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think it comes down to a duty to report as a person of responsibility.

Government changed Treasury Board contracting guidelines the week after we raised these concerns about contracts and conflicts of interest.

Question to the Premier: Why change the guidelines, but not report the dealings of Mr. Dow, a Liberal insider, as uncovered by the Auditor General?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, let me very clear: Mr. Dow did work for the government on this file.

When he became aware of a conflict he withdrew from the file. He notified the client which is exactly what lawyers do, and has subsequently responded appropriately. We have pursued that from the perspective of the client and obtained a legal opinion on that.

But on the question of reinforcing the guidelines, we're happy to do that as we

have responded to the other recommendations of the Auditor General in endeavouring to ensure that we're giving good government and taking the Auditor General's advice.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As me, as the chief of police, if I have knowledge of something that is wrongdoing, then it's an onus to me to provide the agency that deals with it of the complaint or make them aware of it.

As both the Premier and the Attorney General, I would have expected this be taken more seriously, especially as a former dean of law.

Question to the Premier. You have a duty to report, as Premier and attorney general. The law society – I make this point very well – the law society will be notified about this.

Question to the Premier: The only question is whether you will do it or I will do it.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, the duty that I have as attorney general is to report wrongdoing.

Mr. MacKay: You're not doing a very good job of that.

Premier MacLauchlan: The members of the legal profession in this province, as part of their professional work, manage their conflicts of interest. The attorney general is not the police of how lawyers manage their conflicts of interest.

This was done in an appropriate fashion and we have a legal opinion to back that up, so if the leader of the unreliable opposition wants –

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Premier MacLauchlan: – to make a complaint he can go ahead and do it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

FHS minister and FOIPP material

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On December 7th I asked the Minister of Family and Human Services questions about budget under-spending in the home reno program. The minister took those questions as notice. The next day the minister rose to say that her department actually overspent the home reno budget last year, and we're on track to spend the full amount his year.

Question to the minister: Why does the answer you gave to this House contradict information that your department provided in a freedom of information request?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The information that the FOIPP request, a request received in August 2016, includes the projects only and invoices paid up to the point of the request, so they were paid up to the end of August 2016: \$47,000 had been paid for the 2016 intake and \$839,000 for the 2015 intake, a total of 886,000. All projects had not been completed or billed by contractors at that time.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We asked for the information through FOIPP and we understand that 833,000 was spent last year out of a budget of 1.1 million, and you actually said to the House that 1.26 million was spent.

Why would there be close to half a million dollars difference between what we got as a FOIPP request for last year versus what you said was spent?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Homeowners receive the funding when the project is complete. It's not uncommon for a project to be approved in one year and not paid out till the next year, till the next fiscal year. We like to work with our homeowners, as well as the contractors. There are often delays, and we would hate to retract funding that we had promised to somebody for whatever the delay might be, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Let's talk about the current year. We were told that \$50,000 has been spent year to date with another 97 projects that have not been processed. From the information that we've received, I think we would look at – \$49,000 is what we heard, to be precise, was spent year to date.

Are you saying that over \$1.25 million was spent on home reno projects between when we got the FOIPP reply and when the minister made her House statement? Where has the money gone? You said it's all spent, but there are only 97 projects. That does not total \$1.25 million.

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

Ms. Mundy: Current spending – again, are we talking the current fiscal year or the previous fiscal year, Madam Speaker?

An Hon. Member: Current.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you. As I stated, for the current year you said there were 97 projects that were approved but have not been completed. Ninety-seven projects plus the \$49,000 does not equal \$1.25 million.

Could the minister explain where that money went?

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

Ms. Mundy: Madam Speaker, as I said, we work with the contractors and the homeowners.

We are committed to these home renovation projects. We committed to spending an additional \$250,000 in the PEI home repair program in the fiscal year 2016-2017, and we work with the contractors as well as the homeowners. It is not uncommon for a project to be approved in one year and paid out in the following year. But the monies will be spent. The monies have been committed, and the monies will be spent.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Thank you, minister, for that answer. But, could you please explain to me why in the FOIPP request there's only \$833,000 spent for last year when you said you spent \$1.25 million? How does that happen?

We're looking at a FOIPP request. We've seen it time and time again from this government. Provide answers to us across the floor, and then we look and find out later that they are not true or that they are misrepresented.

Could you please explain to me, and explain to Islanders, where that home reno money is?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The money is in the hands of the homeowners or in the hands of the contractors for the work that was contracted.

The FOIPP request was up until August. As of August that's how much money had been paid out. Since August there has been much more money spent out, and I provided the information and I tabled those answers. That is the money that has been spent out. The FOIPP request was as of August.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Islanders have been told – some of them have been denied already – that the money is gone. You told us \$49,000 was spent and 97 projects are pending. You've already told Islanders that the money is spent. Forty-nine thousand plus 97 pending at \$6,000 per does not equal \$1.25 million.

Minister, where is that money?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, the information was broken down and it was tabled and it was provided. I don't have the exact figures here, but when the FOIPP request went in – it's not hard to count. As of August, yes, \$40,000 had been spent. But we have many more months that are under our belt, and we have projects that are still pending that we're working with contractors and we're working with homeowners to get finished. It hasn't been paid out, but it has been approved and it has been spent.

We are committed to these home renovation programs. We are committed to keeping Islanders in their home if they are able and they want to.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Carbon tax and increased home reno funding

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Let's just change gears here a little bit. We were talking about a carbon tax. Improving home energy is important in the way we fight climate change. The Premier's new carbon tax will take more money out of the pockets of the most vulnerable Islanders, and there is no way to argue that point.

Question: When can Islanders expect to see funding increased in home renovation

programs to help low-income families deal with climate change and your new carbon tax?

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

If I can recall, it was this government that increased the programs for low-income Islanders. We're the ones that have committed and completed six of our 11 platform commitments that are targeted towards low- to moderate-income Islanders. We have increased each and every one of our home repair programs by a total of \$400,000 in less than two years.

I have the confidence of every member on this side of the Legislature that when the carbon tax is there, there will be programs there that will help low-income Islanders, and it will put more money back in their pockets.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

McInnes Cooper lawyer re: health care contract negotiations

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

A question to the health minister: Minister, is it true that you have hired a Halifax-based McInnes Cooper lawyer to negotiate new contracts with health care providers on PEI, including doctors, nursing homes, and pharmacists?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Trivers: Sending that money out of province.

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, yes, McInnes Cooper is retained by our department to do negotiations on our department's behalf.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I wonder if the minister could inform this House how much he has budgeted for the legal fees for this high-paid lawyer from Halifax who's with McInnes Cooper.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Once again, McInnes Cooper are retained by our department to do the negotiations on a number of different files, and they would select the lawyer that would represent us.

I do not have the exact fees that would be paid. I can see what I can do to find that out, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

Once again we see McInnes Cooper being contracted by this government, just like we did in the egaming fiasco. Yet this minister has no idea how much he's budgeted to pay this high-priced lawyer to travel over from Halifax to negotiate with our doctors, with our nursing homes, and with our pharmacists.

Again, question to the minister of health: Is there no one here on Prince Edward Island qualified to do this negotiation?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, one of the issues it is when we do retain a lawyer to provide representation to our department, we want to make sure – I mean, everybody knows everybody on Prince Edward Island, so sometimes it's important to get somebody that has no connections to anybody on Prince Edward Island, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Master Agreement negotiation

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

The negotiations alone for the Master Agreement with doctors has now dragged on for a long 18 months and counting, nowhere close to being completed.

Again, question to the minister: Why is this taking so long, and how much has the province spent to date in legal fees on this project alone?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Health and Wellness, and I'm sure the member of the opposition is well aware, it would be imprudent for me to be negotiating on the floor of the Legislature for these three different organizations that provide tremendous services to this province in health care delivery.

Once again, I'm of the understanding that the retaining fees are RFPed, so it would be in the best interest of Islanders to get the best possible value.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

These are essential health care services. Many are raising questions about this government's outsourcing negotiations to an off-Island law firm. Once again, McInnes Cooper.

Pharmacy services spending

I've heard concerns that the government is looking to cut upwards of 18% from what it spends on pharmacy services alone.

Question to the minister: How much have you been directed to reduce spending on pharmacy services?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, yes, we do have a pharmacy service arrangement

with the pharmacy association of Prince Edward Island.

I think it's incumbent upon me as minister to make sure that we are getting the best value when it comes to the cost of pharmaceuticals and the dispensing fees in this province. I can assure this House that McInnes Cooper will be representing our department and representing all Islanders to make sure we get the best value possible for Islanders.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Pharmacy group meeting with HW minister

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

The pharmacy owners' group has been seeking a meeting with this minister. They claim they can save taxpayers' money while improving access to health care here in PEI, which is vitally important, because Islanders right now are not receiving proper health care in many areas.

Again, question to the minister: Why have you refused to meet with the pharmacists on this very important issue?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, the hon. member on the other side seems to believe that I should be negotiating every particular arrangement.

We went through this with the Canadian Blood Services arrangement. When we retain somebody to represent us we look forward to them getting the best possible value for Islanders. I'm sure the hon. member would be well aware that Islanders are paying the highest dispensing fees in the country and I think it's important that we get a reasonable deal for Islanders that's in the best interest of Islanders and taxpayers.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

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

I want to correct one thing that I had stated in my previous question when I said that this minister refuses to meet with any of the pharmacists' groups. I stand corrected. He actually met with the pharmacist owner in his own district. At that meeting, in that that meeting, this minister assured this pharmacy owner that the \$2.5 million or 18% would not be cut away from pharmacies, but then, and four days later, the pharmacy group received a letter from his deputy minister stating that, yes, indeed, this 18%, \$2.5 million, would be cut.

Again to the minister of health: Why will you not sit down with the pharmacists' group and meet with them to discuss options that they want to put forward?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, as an individual who represents a riding, yes, the pharmacy individual in my riding did meet with me, and in that particular case I assured them that this is a negotiation.

I am not dictating a set number (Indistinct). I want people to be at the table discussing what's in the best interests of Islanders. I want to make sure that we get reasonable dispensing fees in this province. We have 48, 49 pharmacies that are providing services all across Prince Edward Island and we want a good deal for Islanders and taxpayers as well as pharmacies, and it's all about getting to the table and negotiating with the negotiators.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Democratic renewal committee mandate

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

The Special Committee on Democratic Renewal has worked hard on a number of fronts over the last year and a half, and I think all members of this House would agree that we've accomplished a lot.

The white paper gave the committee a mandate to look at a number of things beyond different electoral systems such as gender balance, the role of MLAs, the

legislative calendar, and the civility of debate in this House. Of course, I'm disappointed with the government's response to the plebiscite results, but I hope that we can still see progress in the other important areas of democracy which this committee was mandated with.

A question to the Premier: Will the special committee be allowed to complete the rest of its mandate?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, the scope that was laid out in the white paper was laid out with the full intention that this would be the business of this House in the course of this mandate, and indeed, a number of the matters referred to by the Leader of the Third Party have been referred to in throne speeches, so it may well be, and it'll be for this House to give further guidance to the special committee, in the event that those matters are to be pursued by the special committee, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Premier and democratic renewal committee mandate

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

Yesterday, along with the other party leaders on Prince Edward Island, I received a letter from the Premier outlining his plan for election finance reform.

Election finance reform was part of the mandate of the Special Committee on Democratic Renewal so I was sort of surprised when the work we had started in this area was so suddenly and completely overridden by the Premier's letter.

Question to the Premier: Why have you superseded the mandate you, yourself, gave to the special committee on electoral reform?

Mr. Myers: Because you wouldn't tell them what he wanted to hear.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I didn't supersede the committee whatsoever.

I followed up on the ministerial statement that I made last spring and on a commitment that we made in the throne speech, and have laid out very clearly and openly and transparently proposals for consideration with the intention that those would be pursued precisely as is said in the latter part of the letter.

If this House is of the view that the special committee should take up that work, then they may well do so.

But I don't think because a special committee exists that that means that the Premier is prevented from bringing forward very important reforms that will make the kind of change that I believe the Leader of the Third Party and others have been calling for.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Premier and campaign spending limits

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

While I would hope that if the Premier is, indeed, going to supersede the work of this committee that he would at least follow the direction he gave himself in the white paper.

On election financing the white paper spoke of four areas in election financing that should be addressed: who would be able to make donations; how much those people or bodies could make in terms of donations; taxpayer subsidies to the parties; and caps on campaign spending. But that caps on campaign spending was left out of your letter.

Question to the Premier: You changed your mind on whether corporations and unions can make donations, you changed your mind on who was going to continue the work of this body. Did you also change your mind on capping spending limits?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, as the Leader of the Third Party will know, we actually discussed this in my office on November 7th as part of the consultation process that I indicated last spring I would undertake.

I did, also, with the Leader of the Opposition, although I was disappointed on the extent to which that was followed up.

But that's the nature of a consultation. As I said to the Leader of the Third Party when we met, that campaign financing may indeed, but campaign spending may, indeed, be something that arises further downstream.

This is a letter and it's a comprehensive letter with comprehensive proposals that are well laid out, and I encourage all hon. members to take them up in the spirit in which they've been put forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Tourist point of origin and growth trends

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

My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Minister, by all accounts the 2016 tourism year was fairly successful on Prince Edward Island. Could the minister inform the House the point of origin, including growth trends, of most tourists to Prince Edward Island in 2016?

Mr. Myers: And would you like a Christmas card?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

If I do get a Christmas card I hope I get it from other hon. members over there that were signing Christmas cards the day before.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacDonald: Perhaps we could all send one to the media, Madam Speaker.

An Hon. Member: The media didn't mention that one.

Mr. MacDonald: I'd like to thank the hon. member for his question.

Obviously, tourism is a very important industry here on PEI. We had an estimated 1.5 million visitors. When you look at that and compare roughly 6000,000 in Newfoundland, and with our population base which has increased to 149,200 as of today, we're doing very well.

Most of the growth came from northeastern United States, and Quebec and Ontario were our strongest markets. In fact, at one point during the summer I believe Quebec was on a growth of 31% during one month, so it's extremely important.

Thank you.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Tourism in 2017

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

2016 should provide a good base for the upcoming 2017 tourism year.

Minister, what is the outlook for the 2017 tourism year, and what factors are likely to contribute to this outlook, and what role does the dollar play in it?

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The 150th anniversary, there's much marketing taking place at the national level which is going to derive tourism right across the country that we hope we'll draw on visitors to that.

The indication from early bookings, which is relatively somewhat unheard of in our industry till after Christmas or close to March, but there are bookings being placed

right now with roofed accommodations, so that's a really good sign.

Our projection of growth based on a five-year strategy that we just completed was about 3.5%, and we hope to target that.

We'll continue working, and I think this is a big one for Prince Edward Island, is partnering with the remaining Atlantic Provinces. Because we can't afford to do this alone, on our own provinces, by ourselves, but with an investment of \$280,000 a year we get a \$20 million partnership with our other Atlantic Provinces.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Mr. J. Brown: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you, minister.

As we all know PEI's tourism marketing dollars must be spent prudently to maximize their impact.

Minister: Where are the tourism marketing efforts and dollars being targeted for the 2017 tourism year?

Mr. Myers: Charlottetown. Same place (Indistinct).

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

When we market tourism as a whole, we market Prince Edward Island. We don't signify one area over another. We have great product and a great industry from one end of the Island to the other.

We will continue to focus on Atlantic Canada and northeastern United States. It's within driving distance and it's a sure market. Relative effects outside sources or outside effects don't necessarily hurt it.

As far as the dollar value, there's 13 other places in Canada the US population can go, but we continue to grow our tourism product. I don't use that as a relevant excuse

when the dollar goes up and down because they have potential to go elsewhere, but they're coming here.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Wind energy resource increase

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy. The new electricity cables will allow for the transmission of an additional 360 megawatts of electricity. This will allow for more opportunities for exploring wind energy from the Island.

Minister, does your department plan to increase its wind energy resources?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. member, we are very pleased that we do have the two new cables that are being installed. We'll add that 360 to the present 200. We already are, on many days, over that 200. This will mean a more secure and reliable connection as well as prevent us, Maritime Electric, from having to use backup energy here.

We are very excited about the new cables. On PEI we're second to Denmark in the world. We will, in fact, as a result of our energy strategy, one of the recommendations was to increase wind capacity. In 2019 it's been suggested we do 30 megawatts and by 2025 that we have an additional 40. We will be exploring that opportunity.

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

Exporting energy from wind farms

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Wind energy produced for our own use or for export does provide great benefits for Island landowners, and also to businesses and into the Island as a whole. I have a

group in my area who are ready to go with a wind farm.

Minister: Do the new cables provide opportunities for private wind developers to export electricity, and will you commit to working with these Islanders who are interested in developing wind farms?

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

With the new cable it will provide a lot of economic opportunity for Prince Edward Island to export onto the grid, hon. member.

We have had great discussions with a lot of individuals interested. In particular, this increases capacity in rural PEI. We will continue to work with them. One of the things is that if they are able to secure an agreement for their energy on the grid, then we will certainly work with them.

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

Deleted government email accounts (further)

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Minister, can you tell the House whose emails were deleted?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Ms. Biggar: That's a great question, hon. member. That'd be a great question for you to ask the Auditor General.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I feel like my questions are done now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crowbush egaming social cost

Mr. Myers: Last week I asked questions about the government and their opening Crowbush a day early and that whole junket where a bunch of government officials spent the day talking amongst themselves about egaming.

Question to the unreliable Premier: What was the cost to taxpayers for the open day at Crowbush and this private egaming junket?

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

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

I've listened to a lot of the questions over the last few weeks concerning the egaming. As you know, the Executive Council issued an order on March 10th, 2015 for the Auditor General to review this whole file. Most audits would have been just done on the government records of it, but most of – the Executive Council went further and said: You can investigate other companies outside of the government.

There has been an extensive audit done on this, Madam Speaker, and I think those questions should be directed to the Auditor General.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I guess it's nothing new to this minister of covering up a scandal. He was the one with his signature at the bottom of a whole bunch of PNPs on the very last day of the file.

Egaming social meal cost

Question again to the Premier: What was the cost to taxpayers for the \$8,000 surf-and-turf gala dinner held at Sims in Charlottetown after the private egaming junket at Crowbush?

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

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

He answered his own question, \$8,000.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Minister of Finance wouldn't confirm that you guys actually paid for it, so thank you for coming clean on that. It's good to know that we're able to get some answers.

Destruction order re: emails (further)

Earlier in the session I had asked the Premier if he would provide to us the destruction order, and he told this House that he would go look into it and he would come back. It's three weeks ago.

Question to the Premier: Could you table that destruction order to this House, please?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, I said I would go back, and in fact that work is being done.

But let me explain that a destruction order is like a deleted email. The language makes it sound like something wrong is being done. What is called a destruction order by the archivists is a request for documents that are not classified as public records to be destroyed. That's why it's called a destruction order. This goes back – and I said I would go back to 2007 and bring that information to the House, and I will do that, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We've been waiting three weeks for this. I don't know what would take so long. If there was a destruction order you'd think it would be stored somewhere because that committee had to meet to present it.

Can you tell this House: What's taking you so long to get to the bottom of the destruction order of the deleted emails?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Responding to all the other questions that were being asked in the House.

That request for that information has been put there and it will come forward as the decisions that were made by the committee that is conducted or led by the archivist under the public *Archives and Records Act*, and I'm happy to provide that information.

What it will produce, though, is a record of documents that have been destroyed because they're not required to be kept as government records.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm not sure why it's taking the Premier so long to come up with it. I'm not sure why it's taking the Premier so long to tell this House whose emails were deleted, as laid out by the Auditor General. I'm not sure why this Premier is hiding so much.

This Premier told Islanders that he was going to lead by example. Two years into his rule we're seeing what that actually really means.

Legal action against *Globe and Mail*

In Question Period yesterday you took exception to the *Globe and Mail's* exposé into your government's gaming scandal.

Question to the Premier: Did you ever take legal action against the *Globe and Mail* for misrepresenting the facts in the exposé?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: No, I did not, Madam Speaker, I've got better things to do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

You said to this House that what Robyn Doolittle wrote was, in fact, not true. On Twitter yesterday she said it was true.

Can you tell the House: Which is the facts? What she says or what you told this House yesterday?

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, my comment yesterday had to do with the headline, which took up, I think, a whole page as I recall, it's a while ago now, 001.

My point was – and I'll be speaking later today about the mighty Island – every opportunity I have for people to understand that our Island and our province can do well, and in fact do better than the rest of the country, I'll take it, and that's why I –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Premier MacLauchlan: That's why I made the point, and (Indistinct) that's why I made that point.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Myers: Zero, zero, one, indeed, right there, 001.

What the Premier really meant yesterday is he didn't like the media report. Not that it wasn't true, it's that he didn't like the headline.

Billing of government (further)

The Premier also doesn't like talking about emails because he doesn't want Islanders to know what was in them. He wants people to believe that it was all Wes Sheridan's fault, but the roots of this scandal go much deeper than Wes Sheridan.

Question to the Premier: Why would the former deputy minister of innovation be directing staff in another department to funnel gaming payments through a third party for no work?

Speaker: Who was your question directed to?

Mr. Myers: The Premier.

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

Mr. LaVie: They all want up.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Of course we all want up. We want everybody at home and everybody in the gallery, and you, to – I want to reinforce what we're doing in economic development, and we're leading by example. We've put every possible identifier in, based on the Auditor General's report, to succumb to any transparency and accountability.

Our government is moving forward. I know the opposition doesn't like to see that, and it's hard at times to realize the fact, with the progress that we're making, whether it be our exports, whether I just mentioned immigration, whether it be economic development in their own ridings. The investment that we're making is unbelievable and we're excited about it, and we're excited for next year, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's, I guess, shameful to see the minister of tourism play political games with this when I'm asking, basically, questions of: Was there fraud in government? That's basically what I'm saying: Was there fraud in government?

I have emails from the CEO of Simplex to a senior government official that says what \$50,000 worth of work could buy. I have emails from a senior government official arranging the payments to be paid through a third party in order to hide the work.

Question to the Premier: Why do you persist on implying that the egaming scandal was the work of one rogue minister?

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

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

These are good questions. The Auditor General has total authority when it comes to investigation. The *Audit Act* says: the auditor shall have free access to all the files, documents, records related to financial matters –

An Hon. Member: But she didn't

Mr. R. Brown: – of every agency's government or Crown control.

I have respect for the Auditor General. I've known a number of auditor generals over my term, and they've all done extremely well and good jobs.

Under the *Audit Act*, the Auditor General has public inquiry access. That means she has access to anything she wants in government. If she sees anything wrong, she has the authority to contact the RCMP or other facilities.

She's the one that could've contacted them, she hasn't, so she hasn't seen anything wrong in terms of this.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Obviously, to me at least, it was more than just Wes Sheridan involved. The Premier tries to put Wes Sheridan under the bus for this whole session, but obviously there was a whole nest of Liberal insiders involved, there were senior government officials involved, and it extended right to the Premier's office.

Deleted government email accounts (further)

Question to the Premier: For myself and for the Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, will you tell us once and for all, whose emails were deleted?

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

Mr. R. Brown: Madam Speaker, let's set some context here about the egaming situation.

In 2002 the previous Conservative government tried this e-scheme, you can call it, okay, with Earth Future Lottery.

Mr. LaVie: You forget your PNP?

Mr. R. Brown: At that time they were given a legal opinion that said government cannot do this.

The First Nations people on Prince Edward Island who tried to get them – improve their stake in life came up with an idea, approached government to say: Look, could you help us out in seeing if we could do this? If we can have some economic development in Prince Edward Island, if we can have some part of Prince Edward Island success.

The First Nations on Prince Edward – the first people that came here to Prince Edward Island came to approach government with a request to see if they could be included in the economic development of Prince Edward Island. You know, it was tried, it didn't work, but we'll try again, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Statements by Ministers

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

The Mighty Island – Framework for Economic Growth

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, Prince Edward Island is a resilient place.

While we may be small in size, our economic growth as a province has consistently been strong. We have withstood national and international economic downturns through hard work and ingenuity.

Working together, we have built an economy that is balanced, connected, and growing. From a small base, Prince Edward Island's reputation extends across the country and around the world.

Business acumen and entrepreneurship are at the core of our economic success. Whether in the areas of food resources, biopharmaceuticals or advanced manufacturing, company, sector, and overall growth have been driven by individual business leaders.

They have grown companies connected to markets around the world. Indeed, significant improvement in Prince Edward Island exports has been essential to growth across all sectors of our economy.

As of July 1st, 2016, Prince Edward Island's population is estimated to be 148,649, which is an increase of 1.3% over 2015, the fastest growth in the Atlantic region and exceeding the national average.

Average weekly earnings have increased 2.4% on a year-to-date basis through September.

Total labour income on the Island, through the second quarter of 2016, grew by 4.2% on a year-to-date basis, the fastest growth in the country.

Prince Edward Island leads the country in business confidence, with a November rating of 71.4 in CFIB's Business Barometer.

In a report out this week, Colliers National Retail Report for the fall 2016 edition reports that for the years 2012 to 2016 Prince Edward Island is number two among the provinces, after BC, in retail growth over that five-year period.

I am pleased to table in the House late today a framework for economic growth for Prince Edward Island.

The framework, entitled The Mighty Island, underlines our areas of strength as an economy and how we can work together to spur economic growth, job creation, and opportunities for Prince Edward Island's next and future generations.

The character of Prince Edward Island has always been shaped by the fact that our province was built by farmers and fishers, hard-working men and women who faced adversity, suffered doubts, and pressed forward.

This history serves as a guidepost for our future growth.

That includes the entrepreneurial spirit, diversification, and our primary industries and businesses located in communities across our province, big and small, as examples of Island innovation, productivity and growth.

The Framework will identify these areas as critical to our ongoing and future success: encouraging talent and labour-force readiness; advancing immigration and welcoming communities; supporting innovation and entrepreneurship; renewing strategic infrastructure; aligning community economic development; sharpening our export growth focus; and enhancing our global brand.

The Framework is not a conclusion but another step to focus our efforts to grow and to achieve prosperity throughout Prince Edward Island.

We will work to facilitate economic growth. Our job will be to ensure that the environment for doing business in Prince Edward Island is as welcoming and attractive as possible and to grow additional opportunities for people across our great province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Something I promote strongly, and our caucus does, is small businesses and we need to continue to increase our small business across the Island. I said it before, they are the backbone of the Island. If our small businesses and our rural communities are strong and have economic growth, then of course they will spend the money in the urban cities. I believe that whole-heartedly.

I think we have to look at some of the suggestions by this caucus in regards to micro-loans. We can invest in small companies with small micro-loans – I think the hon. member has mentioned that several

times – and get these small businesses to continue to grow. I appreciate that.

I think one thing with that is the need for an infrastructure summit. I think government needs to partner with small businesses and rural communities in looking at our infrastructure as a whole, how our small businesses become involved in improving our infrastructure as a whole across the Island.

We are down 4,000 jobs since this government has been in play. I think we cannot forget that. We've got a long way to go to make up for that. With that, low-income families are asking for help and we're not seeing that help going to low-income families, to people that need it. I think we have a long way to go and a lot of work to do to help those people and to get people back to work.

I do agree that we need to put our brand out there. One suggestion I got a long time ago, I said, was that I think that every product that comes out of the Province of Prince Edward Island should have a barcode on it. When you scan that barcode it shows that this is where the product is coming from and promote PEI to the highest. I believe in that concept, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

For the most part I absolutely welcome the Premier's statement. Of course, the ongoing prosperity and contentment of Islanders is largely dependent on us having a resilient – and an economy which is going to provide well for all Islanders into the future.

The Premier started by calling Prince Edward Island a resilient place. I think in many respects we are. I think the people of Prince Edward Island are resilient, I think the communities of Prince Edward Island are resilient, I think the character of this place is embedded with resilience.

But I think when it comes to our economy we are perhaps not so resilient. I concern myself when we have such an emphasis on exporting goods. That works fine as long as we are dealing with other markets where those goods are well received, where there are no protectionist barriers being erected, and where we can be assured in the long-term that those markets will be available to us. Unfortunately, in the world in which we live today, none of those things is assured. I would much rather see an economic emphasis on Prince Edward Island based on local regional sufficiency, on import substitution, on purchasing local products, on supplying and supporting local businesses.

Obviously, there are elements of that in the Premier's announcement and I welcome that. But I think people need to feel a sense of pride and a sense of promise in what we can accomplish here on Prince Edward Island by and for each other.

I welcome this, but we have to remember that not everything about our future contentment and success will be based on our GDP numbers. We have half the per-capita GDP of Alberta, for example. But I don't think Prince Edward Island is half as good as Alberta. I think we have some very special characters here about this place that go well beyond our economic abilities, and I have great faith in the future of this Island.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Air Tech Maximeville

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In November, officials from my department met with all the Internet service providers, or ISPs, on Prince Edward Island.

The goal of these meetings was to assess the future plans of each of these ISPs and to determine the areas of Prince Edward Island that were most in need of improved service in the short term.

They were also held to determine what role, if any, government might play in deploying high-speed Internet moving forward.

These meetings were very productive and I'm happy to say that we are already seeing results.

Today, Air Tech Communications, a locally owned and operated ISP, announced that it is expanding its services into the Maximeville area. Maximeville is an area that has had difficulty acquiring improved service over the past number of years. Air Tech saw an opportunity to expand into the area and it is now signing up customers. It expects to fully launch its service in the area in January.

Air Tech is an excellent example of a local company seizing an opportunity, and making a significant investment to improve Internet services for islands in rural parts of PEI. What's even more impressive is that they're doing it without any government assistance.

This is exactly the kind of investment we'd like to see from these companies. We want to see private sector investment and competition in the marketplace that occurs without provincial support. We want customers to be offered a choice. Over the coming months we anticipate a dramatic improvement in the Internet speeds available to Islanders, especially in rural parts of the province.

Air Tech's expansion into Maximeville is another big step in that direction, and it is a great example of the entrepreneurship and big-picture thinking that makes things happen here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Indeed, Madam Speaker, it is great to hear that private companies are making the effort to get Internet that's good quality, reliable, high-speed Internet out to Islanders.

As the minister pointed out, they are doing this without government help. I do hope that the minister does commit to no more untendered contracts for high-speed Internet on the Island, and the companies that do exist that are expanding – for example, Bell Aliant is expanding in my area. They're running fibre optic lines down roads to some subdivisions running right beside houses, and EastLink is doing the same thing. I would like to see this minister encourage those companies to branch off those lines and the houses they're running immediately adjacent to allow them to tap in and get high-speed Internet as well.

This is good. This is not a case of too little, too late, because any more improvements we can get are good. This is a testament to private industry and what can happen when the government gets out of the way, does not issue untendered contracts, and lets private industry do what they do best, which is compete and give the best product and service to all Islanders.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Of course, I'm happy for the residents of Maximville and that whole area of Prince County, but I remain distressed for many other Islanders, and many Islanders in my own district of District 17 where they have spotty or no access at all to broadband or true high-speed Internet. We have a lot of dark areas, dark holes, like that across Prince Edward Island.

Of course, it's great when somebody comes forward and are given the freedom and are allowed in an open market to provide service, as Air Tech has been in this area. But I echo the sentiments of my friend over there where – when government gets out of the way and allows companies to work on a level playing field where a large – another large company is not given a leg up or advantages, great things can happen. I know there are many other ISPs on Prince Edward Island ready to go, do not need government

support in order to fill in all of these many dark areas across Prince Edward Island. I hope this is the first of many future announcements, minister.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Principal Advisory for Seniors Health

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, seniors are the fastest growing population in Prince Edward Island.

Statistics show that Island seniors are living longer and are more active and healthier than ever before. The challenge is how best to plan and respond to the needs and opportunities that will arise because of an ageing population.

Today I'm pleased to announce that our department will be hiring a Principal Advisor for Seniors Health. Once hired, this individual's sole focus will be to ensure health policies and programs are meeting the needs of our Island seniors' population.

The Principal Advisor for Seniors Health will be responsible for developing, coordinating, and evaluating strategies that support the health and wellness of Island seniors. The new position will be held within the Department Health and Wellness and report directly to the deputy minister.

Through a range of programs and policies, Prince Edward Island has taken significant steps to meet the needs of seniors, helping them to maintain active lifestyles, remain engaged in their communities, and to stay informed about the services that are available to them.

This new position will implement, coordinate, and evaluate strategies for the health and well-being of seniors which align with the department's vision and mandate. They will also work closely with the already established Seniors' Secretariat and the federation.

The job advertisement for the Principal Advisor for Seniors Health will be posted

through the Prince Edward Island Public Service Commission later this week. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply.

I'd like to recognize members of the seniors' federation that are here with us in the gallery today. We have executive director Linda Jean Nicholson. These individuals do a job advocating and representing for Island seniors, and we thank them for the work that they do and in joining us here at today's announcement.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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 and to say a few words on this ministerial statement. I know Ms. Nicholson quite well as well, and as a matter of fact, I've met with her frequently following their AGMs, which I have also attended, and on several occasions here in the Legislative Assembly I've actually brought some of their resolutions or motions forward that they had discussed, debated at their AGM, back here to the floor of the Legislature, and it was a privilege of mine to do so.

I think a Principal Advisor for Seniors Health is a very important position as we move forward. Our seniors is the fastest growing demographic here on Prince Edward Island, but some of the issues that I think that we're starting to hear about – and, of course, all of the discussion over the last couple of years that I've tried to bring forward to this House and tried to encourage this government to bring forward a youth advocate.

Over the last period of time the outreach that I've had from many seniors here on PEI and the concerns – I've started to wonder if not only do we need a child advocate, but possibly we should be looking at a seniors' advocate as well. Because there are many issues here on Prince Edward Island through the different silos within government

departments that seniors are having a tremendously difficult time to navigate.

There's also serious issues, not just here on Prince Edward Island but of course all around the world, of senior and parental abuse as well. We just heard of a terrible situation in another province here last week where two children of an elderly gentleman who was a self-made millionaire essentially got him to sign over all of his assets. I sat and watched that story, and I just couldn't understand how a child of a parent could comprehend or could be that low that they could do that to their parent after a parent has given a child life, essentially.

Even though this minister has talked about bringing in a Principal Advisor for Seniors Health – and I do applaud that – I think it's a stopgap measure, and I think we seriously need to look at the services that we do provide to seniors here on Prince Edward Island. I'll be watching with much interest over the next little while.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

This morning I had the great pleasure of making an announcement that the Green Party's new health and wellness critic is Dr. Susan Hartley. I wish she were here in my place because I know I have a sense of what she might say.

She is somebody who has worked on the social and economic determinants of health all of her working life, whether that be in private office or in public service. She would say, I'm quite sure, that seniors' health is dependent on many factors. As the minister mentioned, it's about them. It's about diet, it's about activity, it's about them being engaged in their community.

Of course, the WHO definition of health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not just the absence of disease or infirmity, and that idea that our health extends beyond simply not having to

go to the doctor today, but that health is something that we need to be proactively involved in is something extremely important.

I think ageing in place for seniors is something that here on Prince Edward Island we can and should do a better job of, and that will be the announcement earlier today about retrofitting houses and having money available for that, having public transit systems available, recreational opportunities, affordable heat for seniors so that they can live in their communities, because of course we're concerned about the health of seniors, but seniors themselves are great contributors to the health of our communities. When we have multigenerational families living in communities we have better places to live.

I hope that this Principal Advisor for Seniors Health will work across departmental silos and recognize that the health of our seniors is not just a medical concern, it is a social concern, it's an economic concern, and that that is the approach that this individual will take.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table The Mighty Island: A Framework for Economic Growth in Prince Edward Island and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Economic Development and Tourism 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 a letter dated September 14th, 2016 addressed to leaders of registered political parties regarding proposed reforms to political financing and I move, seconded by the

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Palmer: Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table written questions to the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, and I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira, that the said document be now read and do lie on the table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table written questions to the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and questions to the hon. Premier, and Madam Speaker, the ones to the Premier, I just want the Premier to make sure that his ministers do answer these written questions because these are very important questions from people across PEI.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. LaVie: No, you're not answering them. Premier, can you make sure that these questions are getting answered?

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct).

Mr. LaVie: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, 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 Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Energy, I

beg leave to introduce the report of said committee and I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the same be now received and do lie on the table.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the report of the committee be adopted.

The 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 seven times this fall and held meetings on various topics relating to the committee's mandate including an update on the PEI BioAlliance BioAccelerator, the Cornwall bypass capital project, the Borden-Carlton fabrication yard, and active transportation.

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 active transportation:

1. That the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy consult and collaborate with the appropriate stakeholders regarding plans for separate cycling paths along Hillsborough Bridge and the North River Causeway.
2. That the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy meet with the stakeholders involved with the Regional Active Transportation Plan – Greater Charlottetown Area, with the goal of further enhancing active transportation in these municipalities.
3. That government consider providing an exemption to the provincial portion of HST on products that encourage active transportation, with the goal of encouraging people to use active transportation.

Your committee would like to encourage government to enhance active transportation in all areas of the province. This is a large

task, and your committee recognizes that all the changes necessary cannot be implemented at once. Your committee encourages government to make positive enhancements to active transportation infrastructure when the opportunity arises. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Energy, your committee thanks all individuals and organizations that met with us to provide information, advice, and advocacy in matters of importance relating to the topics of infrastructure and energy in our province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Introduction of Government Bills

Motions Other Than Government

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Opposition would like to call Motion No. 71 to the floor.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (R. Reddin): Motion No. 71.

The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock moves, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the following motion:

WHEREAS the Auditor General has completed a review of government's involvement in the failed E-gaming initiative;

AND WHEREAS the Auditor General's Report revealed instances of conflict of interest; noncompliance with legislation, policies and controls; and lack of due regard for transparency and accountability by current and former senior government officials and current and former Members of this Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Auditor General's Report found a culture of secrecy that went

to extraordinary lengths to withhold information about public expenditures from internal and external public disclosures;

AND WHEREAS the Auditor General's Report determined that at least two provincial laws, the *Financial Administration Act* and the *Archives and Records Act*, were broken by government officials, including current and former Members of this Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the findings in the Auditor General's Report contradict information provided to this Assembly and Islanders by current and former Members of this Assembly, creating a situation where facts were deliberately misrepresented to this Assembly and to Islanders;

AND WHEREAS this creates an abuse of the public trust of Islanders and a direct challenge to the integrity of this Assembly that risks weakening public confidence;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Assembly condemn in the strongest terms possible the actions of current and former senior government officials and current and former Members of this Assembly with regards to the E-gaming scandal, including former Premier Robert Ghiz and former Finance Minister Wes Sheridan.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly establish a Special Committee to consider what further sanctions, including administrative and financial, may be appropriate for the Assembly to pursue against current and former Members of the Assembly involved with the failed E-gaming initiative.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock to open debate on the motion.

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

It is with a heavy heart that I find myself having to rise today to speak to our opposition motion that calls for the establishment of a special committee to ensure that those involved in the egaming file are held accountable for their actions related to the egaming scandal.

Yes, I am calling the egaming file illegal. I do believe that there is nothing in this project that could in any way be described as anything else. Those involved in this project ensured that the details were kept away from the prying eyes of Treasury Board and Cabinet. The various deals and schemes that were cooked up were done behind closed doors in secret meetings, and it is clear from reading the Auditor General's report that a number of activities took place deliberately to ensure that there would be no public scrutiny on this file.

We don't have to look far into the egaming investigation as reported by our Auditor General to get the first confirmation that the egaming file is rife with questionable actions. On the very first page the auditor states, and I quote: "Throughout this report, there are numerous examples of noncompliance with legislation, policies and controls."

The most common definition of noncompliance in the dictionary is the failure or refusal to comply as with a law, regulation or term of contract. The auditor on the very first page of the egaming report states: "there are numerous examples of noncompliance with legislation, policies and controls." The egaming file involved noncompliance with the laws of this province, with the policies of the province, and with the controls of this province. As the auditor stresses on that first page as well, "these legislative and policy requirements are designed to minimize risks to government and to protect the interests of taxpayers."

Obviously, those involved in the egaming file were well aware of the legislation in the *Financial Administration Act*, the *Audit Act*, and Treasury Board rules, all of which were ignored and circumvented in as many ways as possible to push forward the egaming file and to keep it secret. Those identified in the auditor's report blatantly chose to break those laws and rules. They chose to put our government at risk for over \$1 million and they chose not to protect the interest of taxpayers.

This is serious business. The violations of law outlined by the auditor are not accusations. They are not conspiracy theories or political rhetoric. These are facts

that were investigated by the independent office of the Auditor General.

On page 2 of the report the auditor points out that: “Due diligence was not applied by various senior officials and staff in approving, disbursing, monitoring and reporting on loans and grants provided to Mi’kmaq Confederacy of PEI.”

We are talking about \$1.5 million of taxpayers’ dollars that we’re aware of to date. It is shocking to note that these three grants disbursed to MCPEI – and only one grant was supported with an application. Can you imagine what would happen in our conventional lending institutions if their financial dealings were carried out this way? I believe we would soon lose respect and confidence in our lending institutions. But the point is, our lending institutions must follow their rules. They are not allowed to break the laws, and if a staff member does so there are consequences. The staff member who ignored financial controls would likely face criminal charges and they most certainly would lose their job. Why is it that the staff and leaders of our government are allowed to break laws without consequence? Why is there a double standard?

The former minister of finance approved a \$950,000 loan by a guaranteed letter that he wrote without Executive Council approval, which is required by Treasury Board policy. It is not an option, it is a requirement. There is no doubt whatsoever that the former minister of finance knew this. He knew the laws. He knew the rules. He deliberately chose to ignore and consequently break them. I don’t know why he would do that, but I know that his decision cost the taxpayers of PEI at least \$950,000.

How many people would get away with that? How many people would get away with issuing a \$950,000 cheque, and hiding the fact that the cheque was even issued from the board in authority?

This was not the former minister’s money. How can you take money that is not your own and knowingly put it at risk? Is it because he did not feel he would have to face the consequences of those actions?

The level to which senior staff of government went to ensure that Treasury

Board and Cabinet were not privy to information on this loan is particularly apparent. We just need to look at the fact that the initial draft request for funding for MCPEI was for \$1.2 million. However, Innovation PEI did not have the funds to issue the grant and they did not want to issue a special warrant.

The reason why they did not want to issue a special warrant was simply that they didn’t want to go before Treasury Board for approval. What did they do? They knew they could approve a loan for under \$1 million without Treasury Board approval, so they dropped the loan to \$950,000 to avoid scrutiny. There is no doubt that this was a deliberate move to manoeuvre and to hide and to manipulate legal scrutiny of this loan.

My constituents cannot conceive how politicians and government senior officials, who know better, can get away with deliberately circumventing laws when, as ordinary individuals, they know they would face severe penalties for similar actions. When the individuals involved in these kinds of secret, behind closed doors kinds of activities get away with breaking laws, it appears that there is one set of law for some, another for others. Simply put, it is not fair, it is not right, it is unjust.

Government is the keeper of the public purse. When that purse is under the direction of lawbreakers who do not suffer consequences for their actions, then we all become tarnished with the brush of being crooks.

I’m sure you have heard that over and over again: They are all a bunch of crooks. They are talking about us. Unfortunately, it is a general perception, widely held, by a cynical public. Our caucus does not like that image. Nor do we feel we deserve – nor do many hon. members in this House deserve – to have that label put upon us. That is why this motion is on the floor. Our caucus wants a committee with legal authority to be put in place to deal with corruption and the breach of laws and government rules and legislation of this province.

Yes, my heart is heavy because I am ashamed that it has to come to this. It is a shame that we must put in place another level of authority that hold our officials

accountable and ensures consequences for those who deliberately, and with intent, seek to circumvent procedures in place to protect our taxpayers.

However, given the Auditor General's reports from the past years, where contracts were not signed and work not carried out, and millions of dollars have been disbursed without proper authority, we must do something.

We don't have to just look at the egaming, as we have seen a similar disregard for accountability in the disbursement and contracting of \$8.6 million in our tourism department. Government also lost another \$4.5 million in the GeoSweep deal. Another \$30 million went down the tubes on a loan that went to a multi-million millionaire on the Holman Grand.

What happened to those involved? Some left government but are now recipients of government contracts. Some still work for government and, again, no consequences whatsoever.

The time has come. We cannot allow these kinds of activities to take place without consequences. Therefore we put forward this motion in the interests of fairness and accountability and in the best interests of all Islanders.

I would ask that all of you here today who believe in equality, in justice, and in consequences for wrongdoing will support our motion.

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'm proud to stand in the Legislative Assembly tonight to address and second our opposition motion that seeks to ensure that Island politicians and government officials are held to account for activities related to the egaming scandal.

While our motion is most relevant to the egaming, I believe that the committee that we are proposing must have a mandate to address all occasions when senior government officials, ministers, and members of the legislative branch breach any law of the government or the province, especially when they're put into place to protect taxpayers' money.

I believe that activities in many files within the government have shown an arrogant disregard and disrespect when it comes to following rules. We saw it in the Provincial Nominee Program, the department of tourism contracts, GeoSweep, and now egaming. These are just public ones.

There are many more examples. All one has to do is read the Auditor General's reports for the past nine years. Our Auditor General, in every report since this government was elected, has raised serious concerns about huge loan portfolios that were mismanaged, and noted many instances where our financial administration laws were not adhered to. I think that that should be given considerable weight.

The Auditor General has talked about contracts that were not signed, invoices that were not received, projects that were not tendered, where millions of dollars were put at risk because due diligence was not done on the file, and properly security measures and procedures were not followed or taken.

The egaming file is the straw that broke the camel's back. As an opposition we have tried every means available to us to try and find answers as to why this government fails to hold senior officials accountable for their actions. We have asked over and over in successive legislative sessions for details to be brought forward on a variety of various loans and files. We have not gotten any answers whatsoever.

We have put in FOIPP requests for information. We have called for public inquiries to the egaming file. We have called for numerous witnesses to be called and brought before the public accounts committee to testify about their role in egaming. We have been blocked by the government every time.

There was a recent exception when our motion to bring forward some key players in the egaming file passed because for once we had an opposition majority. Then, what happened? The very next meeting of that standing committee government shamefully closed ranks and reversed the motion.

Why, I must ask? We don't see this out in the civilian world in courts, but here we see it by the government. Well, because government does not want these individuals to testify. They don't want the public to know the truth and they want this file to go away. They want this cover-up to continue. Let's just keep on burying it.

The Premier talks such great talk about a new government, a government that conducts businesses differently, a government that is open and transparent. In my mind the phrase "open and transparent" has become a joke. He takes every opportunity he can to ensure the opposition efforts towards accountability are met with obstacles and roadblocks.

We will not back down on the egaming file. We believe that everyone is equal before the law and I believe that wholeheartedly. When laws are broken deliberately to hide files and the loans from oversight, those who take these actions need to suffer the consequences. It's suspect when you see documents and email destroyed on the egaming file. We're talking about government documents that were destroyed. They were deleted. They were deliberately held from public record so that nobody would see them. To me that's corruption.

I have to ask: Why were these documents destroyed? It seems fairly simple (Indistinct) that someone didn't want the Auditor General to see them. They did not want the people of Prince Edward Island to know what was contained in those emails. They didn't want them made public. They were afraid. They wanted this file covered up and they do not want opposition to talk about it. Again, they didn't care that they were breaching our own *Archives and Records Act*.

What have we seen? We saw them go back in after and change the rules. Just another law to be broken. Islanders deserve to know why these records were destroyed and who

authorized the destruction. I know what would happen if I, in my previous profession, would have went and destroyed evidence or hid evidence from the court. I wouldn't be standing here today, that's for darn sure. These records were key to the Auditor General determining the facts surrounding this file and determine just how much taxpayers dollars actually went into the egaming project. But they were destroyed. What we told the public here basically was: This government can live by a different standard of rules and regulations.

The auditor figured about \$1.2 million of taxpayers' dollars was lost, but she was not quite sure because her investigation was impeded by the lack of these documents. I think in a direct question I made to her, she said that's all that was found. There could be substantially more. There were funds that were hidden within other departments. As she stated: We expect that were other costs associated with egaming that we were unable to obtain.

It's outrageous. If our own Auditor General could not access this information, how are people of PEI to know how much of their money was actually lost in this scandal and this cover-up? It's disgraceful that any Auditor General would be put into such a position that she was forced to make that statement. It is disgraceful that this government, this Premier, treated our Auditor General with such disrespect. He was supposed to do things different. We need to take all measures necessary to get this information so our auditor can review it and complete her job.

Again, where is the openness, the transparency and the accountability the Premier promised? Where is the honesty?

Like the mover of this motion, I am disappointed that we have to come to this part and this point where our government engages in cover-ups to keep people who have broken its own laws from receiving the consequences of their actions. I question why the Premier would even bother to have the auditor examine the egaming file that his departments and agencies were not going to cooperate. Perhaps he thought this government could get away with the destruction of email and pin message and documents.

I commend our Auditor General for tackling this matter and reporting it to the very best of her ability. I'm sorry for the position that this government put her into. She brought forward some very serious matters, despite the fact that she had obstacles put in her way, despite the fact that she was flat out denied information, despite the fact that some departments took nine months to cough up the information required, and then much of it was incomplete.

I find it hard to believe, whether I was in previous business or a previous position, that I could not go into a back room or a back filing cabinet and pulled a document that said: Destruct this. Or, this is the authorization. I don't understand why it would take nine months. I don't understand why the Premier can't walk into somebody's office and say: Who destroyed the emails? Where is the destruction order? Give it to me.

It's frustrating, it's humiliating –

Mr. J. Brown: Only 2,500 (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: We're not talking rocket science. I'm sure that the Auditor General was surprised by the lack of respect to her position and for the breach of the *Audit Act* and the powers that she works under.

We plan to continue to pursue this matter until justice is done for the people of Prince Edward Island. I promise that.

Whether we like it or not, we need an authority that will seek punitive damages and actions against those who abuse their positions for their own gain and circumvent provincial legislation at will. Islanders deserve good government and accountable government. They deserve to know that if someone violates our laws and acceptable accounting practices when they destroy files to cover up their actions that there will be consequences. We must not turn a blind eye, and obviously our government will not take the necessary action to ensure justice is carried out. We need a new commission, a new body, a new authority to oversee our government and we cannot allow corruption to go unchecked. We cannot allow government to go unchecked.

The establishment of this authority will be a big job, but it's an important job and it must be done right for the good of the Province of Prince Edward Island. If government is not prepared to deal with those who participated in the cover-up and deceit that surrounds the egaming file, the committee will have its first task to take that file. In the interest of good government and the taxpayers of our province – and I think that's something we've forgotten. I think some people – we have forgotten – I know I haven't, I know this caucus hasn't, but we cannot forget who we work for. We work for every man, every child, and every woman from tip-to-tip. I think sometimes we're forgetting that.

If government is not prepared to deal with those who participated in this cover-up and deceit that surrounds the egaming file, then the committee will have its first task to take that file.

Madam Speaker, in the interest of good government and the taxpayers of the province, I ask for the support of this motion.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This issue has been dragging on for some time. It's interesting that prior to the election in 2015 the Premier made it his matter to bring this and send this to the Auditor General. But the Auditor General's comprehensive review on the egaming initiative identified areas to strengthen accountability and build public trust, but reading this motion, it really is a vote of non-confidence in the Auditor General.

In one sentence they're confirming what the Auditor General has done, in another sentence they're non-confirming what she has done. I think we have to be clear on this, and I'm going to be clear on what our

government has done to date to satisfy transparency and accountability.

This is a matter we take very seriously. Indeed, it was our government that sent this file to the Auditor General, underlying how seriously we see this. We campaigned on it. As a government we have responded. We have acted quickly on all the recommendations which we've said numerous times. Seven of the 15 recommendations were directly related to my department. We have also reviewed the recommendations that applied both across government and in specific departments to ensure we are doing business the right way. These changes will strengthen accountability and public trust.

The steps we've taken based on the Auditor General's recommendations will help ensure that moving forward all checks and balances are in place when approving and dispersing loans. Not once have I heard the opposition or the third party get up and commend the government for taking these initiatives.

We added a new conflict of interest policy to the Treasury Board policy manual for contractors, which has been in place forever. We amended our approval process for grants at Innovation PEI to ensure the scope of the project is being funded and is clearly defined. We amended Innovation PEI's disbursement approvals to ensure all funds are being used in accordance to the terms in the letter of offer. We reinforced in IIDI not to advance funds before security is in place.

We have committed to ensuring all significant information is disclosed during financial reporting. We are providing quarterly reports on our loan portfolio, and the language around what is to be reported has been strengthened.

The seconder of the motion, the hon. member, talked about our loan (Indistinct) loans, and the loan write-offs. If I remember correctly, it was the opposition that really pushed our loan write-offs to be disclosed, and we've done that. We've tabled it, we've made it public. The media has it. Everybody has it. Our loan portfolio drives the economy of Prince Edward Island and they tend to forget that rather quickly. Twelve thousand five hundred jobs are directly related to the

loan portfolio that we require to run the economy of Prince Edward Island.

Not only that, but there's fishermen –

Mr. Myers: That's the problem, actually.

Mr. MacDonald: Pardon me?

Mr. Myers: That's a problem, actually.

Mr. MacDonald: There's fishermen that have loans. There's farmers that have loans. There's small business owners, operators, have loans, and that's a problem? That's not a problem. That's good government. That's driving the economy of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) our money, actually. It is our money.

Speaker: Hon. member, you're going to get a chance to speak to this.

Mr. MacDonald: It's a self-sustaining fund.

Mr. R. Brown: It's their money too. Farmers and fishermen.

Mr. MacDonald: It's a self-sustaining fund. Ask the fishermen sitting around you if anybody has ever accessed a loan from IPEI or Finance PEI.

Madam Speaker, it's so important that we continue to advance the economy, and our loan portfolio is part of that.

I can't foresee anyone standing up against the loan portfolio of IPEI or FPEI or IIDI or our grant incentives. The hon. member of the third party, almost \$600,000 in 2016 was invested in District 17. Almost \$40,000 was invested in small to medium enterprises to keep students working. We never hear that in the House.

An Hon. Member: Good news.

Mr. MacDonald: We never hear the good news stories. It's always doom and gloom.

Our government introduced our province's first ever whistleblower policy in November of 2015 and we intend to act on the recommendations of the Auditor General to enact this policy into legislation.

We have announced a new plan for records management that will modernize the process and increase education.

Additionally, our government has taken several key lessons from this report. Plain and simple, we don't do business like that. We're changing. We're moving forward. First, the Cabinet must be informed and discerning of all significant files. Second, we have underlined the importance of ministerial responsibility.

Throughout this is legislative sitting the opposition has made numerous attempts to blame individuals. As a government we have taken the recommendations of the Auditor General to heart. We have acted on recommendations, and we'll continue to move them forward. We are focused on providing Islanders with good government.

Our government will approach economic development with sound business sense, with a view of building on our province's successes.

For the people of Prince Edward Island we have to keep moving forward, and looking back, since we've been elected in May of 2015, a year and a few months in, and having all these changes really allows the public – and I attended the chamber of commerce reception the other night. It was really nice to have five or six really good business people come up to us and say: You know what? You guys are doing a good job. Just keep going and don't worry about the rhetoric surrounding some of the things that happened in the past.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

An Hon. Member: Kevin Murphy.

Mr. MacDonald: And I understand –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct).

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Speaker: Hon. members, you're all going to have a chance to speak to the motion.

Mr. Myers: Mike O'Brien.

Mr. MacDonald: But the facts don't lie. When you have the Canadian Federation of

Independent Business having the highest – Prince Edward Island having the highest rating in business confidence at 70-some per cent, and your retail – the Premier mentioned all these stats, and I don't need to go over them again –

An Hon. Member: Do it, come on, get over (Indistinct).

Mr. MacDonald: To demonstrate the province's efforts and successes, what we're here for, we're here to encourage business investment and development, sales in key economic sectors, which we've done. We're creating greater external success for PEI companies attracting businesses to the province, which we've done.

We're developing labour market strategies, including entrepreneurship strategy and youth employment, which were done and will be ongoing.

Realizing business development opportunities from the use of major physical assets – Slemmon Park, the timber yard. Recruiting and maintaining immigrant investors. Reducing red tape for investors, which we've done. Making PEI a world leader in food production and innovation, which we've done. Disclosing loan write-offs again, which we've done.

I want to remind everybody in this House that these are friends, neighbours, and relatives. When we disclose a loan write-off let's pay attention to it, because these are people that put their lives on the line and maybe their life's savings. Everybody's quick to criticize. We always think of the Testoris and those types of companies that come and go, but these are small little guys, inshore fishermen, farmers, small businesses that take a risk to contribute to our economy, and we stand up and start criticizing the loan portfolio based on a few bad apples.

Well, let me tell you, it's less than 1% of our failure. We make \$5 million a year based on our interest in these loans, Madam Speaker.

Leader of the Opposition: You said 15 or 16 last week!

Mr. MacDonald: Five million – no, 16 million's been written off.

Speaker: There's no debate –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) 16 million (Indistinct).

Speaker: There's no debate across the floor, hon. members.

Mr. MacDonald: That's public knowledge. He's obviously not paying attention.

Speaker: The minister has the floor.

Mr. MacDonald: Five million dollars a year. When they say we're going back to the taxpayer year after year, we're not going back to the taxpayer. This is a self-funding program and that's what's so good about it. We're driving the economy and we're loaning money to those people that require it.

Mr. Myers: You're a bank. You're the royal bank.

Mr. MacDonald: There's lots of loyalty all across the Island, then, if that's the case.

Improving Internet services, we're working hard to do that. Increasing awareness of the importance of tourism in the Island economy, we're doing that. Demonstrating the province's efforts to collaborate with industry and (Indistinct) plan for tourism. Working closely with the tourism industry.

I'm just going to talk a little bit on accountability and transparency and what we've done to date, and this is really important for this, but this motion, I can tell you right now, I won't be supporting it whatsoever. I really think it's a re-account of what we've heard over the past few months towards the Auditor General, and I think that's really important that we clarify that.

Accountability and transparency, engagement, central theme and commitment of platform mandate, smaller Cabinet is leading by example. Premier's office was streamlined –

Mr. Myers: Cabinet's not smaller.

Mr. MacDonald: Premier MacLauchlan will take a reduced salary.

Mr. Aylward: (Indistinct) only way it's smaller is (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. MacDonald: Eligible MLAs will forgo their pensions.

Mr. Myers: Oh, that's what you meant by smaller.

Mr. MacDonald: Commitment to PEI being an innovator and make government data open accessible. Appointment of first ethics and integrity commissioner –

Speaker: Hon. members, the minister has the floor.

Mr. MacDonald: It's funny, Madam Speaker, every time you start talking about accountability and transparency and saying exactly what we've done over the past 15 or 16 months, I get chirped, or he gets chirped or he gets chirped.

We want to keep going. We want to grow forward.

Extend the conflict of interest requirements to deputy ministers, senior political advisors, similar to ministers. Extend post-employment requirements to deputy ministers and senior political advisors. New requirements for Cabinet ministers to publicly release detailed copies of travel and hospitality expenses. Mandate letters posted publicly. Small number of Cabinet liaisons. Adoption of whistleblower. Introducing the lobbyist act.

I'm not sure what else we can do, since being elected in May of 2015, to continue to grow transparency and accountability –

Leader of the Opposition: Stop breaking the rules.

Mr. MacDonald: – I cannot see where – well, I'd like you to prove where we broke the rules since May of 2015 –

Speaker: There's –

An Hon. Member: That's right, yeah –

Mr. Myers: There's (Indistinct).

Speaker: – no debate across the floor, hon. members.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, I won't be supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Madam Speaker –

Speaker: Hon. members.

Ms. Compton: It's a pleasure for me to rise this afternoon to support this motion.

I feel it would be a major step towards accountability for this government, and for the people of Prince Edward Island with the motion we're seeking today.

As it says in the motion, "...the Auditor General's Report revealed instances of conflict of interest; noncompliance with legislation, policies and controls; and lack of due regard for transparency and accountability..."

We can't just keep saying: Never mind what happened in the past, let's just keep moving forward. It would be like telling a child: It doesn't matter what you did last week, we're not going to look at that, we'll just keep moving forward, we'll change the rules, or I'll make sure you'll follow the rules. Following the rules is the problem. Someone should be accountable.

If you worked for a private business and you did not follow the policies that they had in place, then you would be held accountable. This is the money of Island taxpayers. It's not the money of one of us in here to decide where it should go. It's the money of Island taxpayers. They want accountability. We each hear it. It doesn't matter which side of the floor you're on. You hear it, too.

They want some answers to how this file happened, who was involved, and what is going to be done to ensure that they are held accountable. People on Prince Edward Island want some answers. That's the motion that we have put forward.

Unfortunately, as a result of the scandal, such as the Provincial Nominee Program, the tourism contract scandal, GeoSweep, and egaming, the image of the government has been tarnished and skepticism has spiraled. You can talk about openness and accountability, but Islanders do not see that. They see the fact that you are not releasing the names of whose emails were deleted. You're not doing anything to hold any of those people to account.

Too many Islanders no longer trust their government. We must ensure that we have a mechanism put in place to ensure that the rules and the laws of our province are held to the highest degree of scrutiny. That is not happening.

You say it's the responsibility of the minister. The minister is no longer there. What about the bureaucrats? We don't want to throw them under the bus. If you do something wrong, you need to be held accountable. That's where this is coming from.

The egaming scandal, I believe, was the straw that broke the camel's back. The revelations by the auditor that can only be described as wrongdoing shocked our caucus and all of Prince Edward Island. It portrays the actions of a government that somehow has lost its sense of obligation and respect for accountability in the administration of government.

I just mentioned to the hon. member beside me here that maybe we do need to invest in a time machine. The minister across talked about a time machine. Maybe that's what we need to get this government to look back and see what happened under this government –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Compton: Not a new government or an old government, this government. It portrays the actions of a government that somehow has lost its sense of obligation and respect for accountability in the administration of government. It can't continue.

We all know right from wrong, at least that's what we were taught, and I believe that many of you in this House – not just from opposition, but on the government side of the House – realize that such actions

cannot go uncensored. We all know that that's how you feel.

To go to Public Accounts, which is where we talk about and decide about the actions about the coffers of Prince Edward Island, when we pass a motion that did get passed, and then the next week come back and they reverse the motion, it's disheartening. It's disheartening for the opposition who is trying to hold everyone to account. It's disheartening for the committee that is trying to do the work that needs to be done to have motions turned around because this government was whipped.

Someone told that committee: Now, go back and change it around. We don't want to call those witnesses. It's wrong. We are trying to do the work, in Public Accounts, of what Islanders want to see happen with true, honest, transparent government.

Islanders believe in equality of justice and they cannot help but question why someone in government can get away with actions that they would be fired for, or worse. They might possibly face criminal charges, yet there is no recourse. No recourse for any of those people who did not follow the rules.

You can say: We've amended, we've enforced, we've changed. But what good is that going to be if there is not some account for the actions of the people who were involved in the wrongdoing?

It has been stated by previous speakers we cannot allow individuals in the egaming file who abused their power to ensure that taxpayer dollars could be utilized for a scheme that they deliberately hid from administrative scrutiny – we cannot allow this.

The fact that many of the documents in egaming – or emails surrounding this debacle – were not obtainable or didn't exist or were deleted only adds to the frustration of Islanders and our caucus in trying to determine the facts around this cover-up.

We've heard it from the Auditor General, how frustrating it is, and how she could not really come to a decision without those emails. She can only do what she can do. If she's not going to be given the information

that she needs she cannot come to a full decision.

We do not trust the use of the word – or we do not use the word cover-up easily. This is a serious allegation. On this side of the House, we do not want to be dealing with this. We want to deal with the everyday job and issues that need to be faced for this province. We do not want to have to go back. We do not want to say someone needs to be thrown under the bus for this. We do not want to say people need to be held accountable.

How are we going to change things if you just say, moving forward, you can't do it? Then someone does it again. Then someone else says, moving forward, you can't do it –

Mr. McIsaac: Checks and balances –

Ms. Compton: – just keep changing – there are no checks and balances. There are no checks and balances.

We're saying there were no checks and balances five years ago, or 10 years ago –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) they just don't follow rules.

Ms. Compton: – you did –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct).

Ms. Compton: – this government did not follow the rules. That is the problem.

The Auditor General is fairly clear in outlining a number of instances where email accounts of senior government officials, who were key participants in the egaming initiative and the establishment of a financial services platform were removed after leaving government.

We look at this whole debacle. We look at the egaming. We look at the loyalty card program. We look at the financial services platform. It was like we had a group of people who said: We're going to find a scheme that works and get money out of government. That's exactly what happened. With no intent or plan for any of those schemes to work. That's how Islanders are looking at this. That's how opposition is looking at it.

There was never ever any big plan to grow the coffers of the province or to make an investment that was going to be viable with this file. It was one thing after another. The same key companies and players were involved. It is a concern for Islanders. Money was lost for no good reason and because people did not follow the rules.

Emails were destroyed and other records that the Auditor General requested related to these individuals were not provided. Where did they go? Why were they destroyed? Who ordered the destruction? Those are questions that need to be answered. We cannot move forward without having those questions answered.

We believe that the key players involved in this scheme need to be questioned about their roles. We believe that there should be consequences for their actions. That is what this motion is all about: Following the rules, and if you do not follow the rules consequences for your actions.

Politicians and their senior aides should not be able to break the laws of the province or the laws of our country without consequence. It's very unfortunate that we have to bring forth this motion that calls for another authority to be put in place to ensure the corruption surrounding the egaming file is dealt with, but we feel the necessity to do it. We feel it. We're urged by Islanders to do it. They want answers. They want to know how this happened. They want to know who is involved.

I look forward to support from this whole House on this motion.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is a really good motion. I think it outlines really well what Islanders have been saying since before the last election. That this government likes to think that they have made these great steps, and by sending it to the Auditor General that they've fixed everything, and by putting one of the very

ministers who is responsible for the cover-up, and had been covering it up since his time as minister of innovation, that they have somehow solved all this. They really haven't.

Having been involved and attending the Public Accounts Committee meetings I know that it's going to take a lot of pushing from the members that aren't Liberal members in this committee to push to get any answers because the committee members that asked questions are always blocked. Anybody who comes along who is not a committee member, like myself, is told that, constantly questioned about whether or not they're allowed to ask questions when the rules are clearly stated that are allowed to. When I brought it up in the House they whined about it over beside me here because they want to silence my voice. I will commit to all Islanders that my voice won't be silenced by a Liberal majority at Public Accounts.

I think Islanders deserve answers. These are answers that I have been looking for since before the Auditor General became involved. Myself and the Member from Stratford-Kinlock were pushing really hard for some of these answers in Public Accounts prior to this investigation every happening.

The Auditor General's report outlines a lot of issues with government. I know over the past number of reports, including this special audit, there is a number of things going on that are way out of line. The Auditor General's report found that there is a culture of secrecy and that they did go to extraordinary lengths to withhold information.

Today in Question Period and another day in Question Period I spoke about information that I have – and it's public record, anyway – but it was how a former deputy minister who moved to another department was still directing a vendor on how they should bill government through a third party back to another department. You're thinking: How is that? These are the types of things that this motion looks to clear up. These are the types of things that should really concern all Islanders and these are the types of things that the minister of economic development himself should be worried about.

The minister of economic development takes exception to motions like this, to questions that we have, to things that we have to take forward. Does he honestly think that this is what we want to be doing, that we want to be taking motions to the floor like this, asking government to follow rules to take care of the public purse more closely than they do, be responsible for their actions? Of course we don't. When that becomes the job of the opposition I think we're way far along from where the opposition should be.

The fact that government is so far off track is why motions like this have to come to the floor. It's why we have to discuss them here and it's why we have to debate them here. The minister of economic development says we never say that they do good. He knows that's not the case. On numerous occasions – just this year I've seen members responding to ministers' statements saying: Congratulations, that's great. I've seen bills pass on the floor here this very fall unanimously because people thought they were great on all sides. Three parties were able to say yes, that's good for Islanders.

The times when we're not saying that are the times we really should be listening because those are the times that we're speaking, not just for all Islanders. The minister of economic development is also concerned that the news doesn't get out about all of the good loans. Government has about 20 spin doctors to do that job. That's not my responsibility as a member of the opposition. That's not the responsibility of any of the nine people who are MLAs in this Assembly who adhere to the opposition to government. Their job isn't to tout all the loans that you have in good standing. You need to do that. You have to figure out a way to get your message out. The onus shouldn't put on the opposition nor should we be chastised for doing the very job as prescribed to us by the Queen, for that matter, the Lieutenant Governor. This is our job and this is what we're put here to do and this is what we represent.

The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River talked about the justice of some of these things and I'd like to touch on that. The feeling that I get out there when I talk to people, and I hear it at the coffee shops and I hear it at the gas stations, people say: Every

week when you read the courts and somebody is going to jail for breaking the law, why is it – and they always say this – when it's the friends of government and it's some shady deal inside of government no one goes to jail? Why are they protected? Why are they afforded special protection that regular people just can't get?

That's a great question. That's a lot of the basis of the questions that we had in this fall sitting about egaming. The crux of it is – even the fact that day after day we can't get answers on whose emails were deleted.

The Member from Tignish-Palmer Road asking whose emails were deleted – you won't answer him either. Thankfully he sees how important this is to Islanders. It is important to Islanders. But the fact that day after day you won't answer it says a lot of things. Number one, it says you have something to hide. Number two, it says you are extending special privileges to your friends to make sure that whatever it is that you're hiding that no justice can be served for it. That's not what I believe in. I believe in justice for all. If you're going to play the game on the shady side of the rules and you get caught, you should be punished. Punishment shouldn't just be for other people for other events and other things, it should be for everyone. It should be for every time laws are broken that there's punishment.

This is what the minister of economic development said: Going forward, there is going to be punishment. You expect Islanders to believe that? These are the Islanders that you already told you'd be different. These are the Islanders that you said: No, not on my watch, this isn't the way I do business. Yet day after day not only himself, he has stood up and not answered questions and sheltered and harboured these fugitives. So has the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the minister of education, minister of economic development. Wow, can you imagine? Can you imagine that in this day and age that high-ranking government officials would go this far to protect someone? Who? I guess that's the question I've had every day is: Who? Who is it you are protecting and why are you protecting them?

The Auditor General has also laid out that provincial laws were broken. The *Financial Administration Act* and the *Archives and Records Act* were broken by government officials and current members of this Assembly. Unfortunately, there are no repercussions for breaking those acts either. This is where government really has to clean things up. There has to be some sort of pay for breaking the rules, there really has.

I know that government has tried very hard, the Premier in particular has tried very hard, without actually saying – he’s been extremely cute about it, - he’s tried really hard to paint this as Wes Sheridan. Rogue Cabinet minister is basically the way he’s playing it, that a rogue Cabinet minister did this all alone. Nobody else and it was just him and he went off and he made these decisions. (Indistinct) the 15 people that golfed down in Crowbush that day that you opened the golf course early that was more than just Wes Sheridan. People who ate \$8,000 worth of food down at the Murphy’s joint there at the corner were more than just Wes Sheridan. There were lots of people there that night to eat steak.

This is a pretty deep-rooted issue. This is why government refuses to let it come to light because they know what skeletons are buried there. They know who’s being protected and they know what information they’re shielding Islanders from.

I also take exception to the fact that it’s only the Auditor General’s responsibility to bring these things forward. I also take exception to the fact that we’re somehow questioning the Auditor General by bringing these questions forward. Government, all they have to do is answer the questions. They’ll get answered one way or another because over here we’re not afraid to ask the questions.

Quite frankly – and I’ve told members of our own party – it doesn’t matter to me who was involved. The answer’s going to be the answer. Over on this side we’re not protecting anyone. We will continue down that road of finding out for Islanders who was involved and bring justice to everyone –

Mr. J. Brown: Go back and do a Polar Foods inquiry.

Mr. Myers: – even your friends.

There was one.

Ms. Compton: There was one.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: There was one.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: Did you forget that?

Speaker: Hon. members, there isn’t any debate. The hon. –

Mr. Myers: Go back to signing your Christmas cards, son.

Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: He ran out of glue stick. Could somebody on the second floor bring a glue stick down for him?

The minister of the economic development talked about what a great job government’s doing managing the portfolio. He’s talking like it’s his money. Well, it’s not his money and it’s not their money. That’s the money of Islanders. This is the part that government has to start wrapping its head around.

These things that you’re getting involved with, when you lose money, you’ve lost Islanders’ money. When you invest in a failed egaming scandal it’s Islanders’ money that was lost. It wasn’t your money. You show up for photo ops and you pat yourself on the back and say: We’re doing this. You know what you’re doing? You’re taking money from people and you’re redistributing it and trying to pat yourself on the back for it. You’re government. You’re supposed to be there for the people.

Photo ops, to me, give me the impression that you’re in it for you, that that’s much more important than what’s good for people. Otherwise you’d redistribute the money and not go out of your way to smile and get pictures, and I see the pictures all over the place.

The Premier said this isn't the way he does business. He doesn't do business like this. Let's talk about how he does do business: hides things from Islanders. He doesn't answer questions, goes to tremendous effort to deflect. We've all seen in this session the deflection, and it's gotten worse as the weeks have gone on. It's to the point now where I get up and ask a question, the answer on the other side isn't even remotely close. It doesn't even matter. I ask the minister of education whose emails were deleted and he said: I want to talk about PISA instead. That's what he said to me. This is what we have to contend with.

But you know what? I'm out and about in the holiday season going to these events, and I know not many Liberals are showing up, as we found out last night at some of the events around town. It's been well noted that you're not, and it's because, I guess, you don't like the criticism. Maybe you don't think you have a whole lot of friends out there anymore, and you're probably right. You're probably right. It's funny. High-ranking Liberals are stopping me at these events and saying: What are they hiding? I'm like: I think you would know, of all people. So it's even secrets inside.

This government also – the Minister of Finance has been famous for it, the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning's been famous for it, the Premier's done it, the minister of economic development has done it – every time we get into a seam that's starting to hurt, whenever we get them against the ropes, all of a sudden they say: No, no, you're throwing the Auditor General under the bus by saying she's not doing a great job.

The Auditor General does a great job. She has a very tough job. There could be six Auditor Generals and it would never get to the bottom of half the stuff you fellows have going on over there. A lifetime's worth of work in 10 years you've created for auditor generals in this province.

I'm telling you, you talk about Wes – now you won't say his name, but I'm going to say it for you – you talk about Wes Sheridan, that it was all his fault, that the Premier really tried hard to slide that in to make everybody believe: Well, no, it was someone else who did it. Come on. It wasn't

just Wes Sheridan. I know the way government works. I've worked in government. For anybody who's spent any time working in government, you know that a Cabinet minister couldn't just make things happen all alone. There'd have to be a whole bunch of people involved before anything ever moved. Before anything could ever happen you'd have to get so many bureaucrats involved it wouldn't even be funny, so it wasn't just Wes Sheridan. There's been a whole bunch of people been instructed to do a whole bunch of things, and it's rife through government.

The minister of economic development also talked about how government is a bank, and how they're the key lender in the province and they're driving the economy through their bank because they're lending so much money that without them we'd be toast. I'm thinking I'm not sure, and when I say I'm not sure that's a good thing, I'm not saying that I'm against farmers or I'm against fishermen. What I'm saying is: When did government's key portfolio become banking?

They key function of government, according to the minister of economic development, now is banking. While people wait for speech pathologists, while people wait for psychiatrists, while people wait for hip replacements, while people wait to be assessed for autism, government's key portfolio is bank lender.

It's a matter of priority, folks. It's a matter of: Can government come up with priorities that match the priority of Islanders? Is government capable of seeing what it is that Islanders are looking for? You know what? I say this with greatest sincerity. I know everybody in this House personally. I've spent five years here. I know there's people who really care about their constituents and Islanders, and there's people that are really in tune to the struggles on the ground. I'm not sure the Premier's one of them, and I mean that sincerely. I'm not sure that he understands.

I want to go back to the power outage, when we had the power outages and the Premier hand-delivered cheques all over Kings County, \$5,000 cheques. I had somebody stop me at the Rodds banquet last night to talk to me about the Premier handing out

cheques, and they said: How did that get to the right people? This was a high-ranking Liberal, by the way, whose name I won't say just to save their privacy.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: You know what? They said: It just shows that the Premier doesn't understand –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: – who really needed the help in that, all those people who had lost their groceries.

I feel like it matches back to everything that we're saying here in this motion. The Premier kind of has gotten himself out of touch. We saw it with the plebiscite. We even saw it with the election financing where one day on the radio I'm listening and it's coming tomorrow, and the next day I hear it's coming the next fall and there's going to be consultation.

Is he acting all alone? Do you guys meet? Do you talk about things? I know in our caucus we have great discussions and debates about ideas. It's an exciting place to be able to have a discussion. It's an exciting place to be able to speak your mind. Are you guys allowed to speak your mind? I'm not sure.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Ms. Compton: Not even a little bit.

Mr. J. Brown: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: I can smell that glue stick from here. I think I'm allergic to that glue stick. I'm getting stuffed up.

Anyway, when we have discussions we are always able to come to a conclusion and walk out as united. That is great, and that's a great type of debate to have in a caucus. I think the Premier instead of discouraging that should be encouraging that. He makes all these decisions by himself, and I know that some of you are more political than that. He's promised five different things on electoral reform. He promised four different things now on campaign financing. Every day it's something different. I think he gets

up and he reads the headline in the paper and he's like: Uh-oh.

He's like the football quarterback that's just about to throw the ball and he circles back and he gets sacked ten years back. You guys lost a lot of yards this fall. There'll be a touchback here soon if you don't get back up and try to drive the ball up field, but it's going to take a team. It's going to take a team. You can't just have a quarterback if none of you are willing to protect him. There's no linebackers over there. I can see it every day. When we're asking questions, everyone's head goes down.

Mr. Trivers: Everyone agrees.

Mr. Myers: When I started –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: When I started five years ago it was hard for me to ask questions because everybody had gathered around Robert Ghiz. Hon. members would stand up, everyone's head was up. It was intimidating. It was an intimidating place to ask questions because everybody's head was up and they're ready to protect the brand. They're ready to protect one another, and they were ready to protect their premier.

When I stand up in this Legislature, which I have done nearly every day this fall, heads drop. That is the most telling body language in the world. Heads down, it means you don't support the boss –

Ms. Compton: It happened today.

Mr. Myers: It happened today, everyone's heads were down for the whole Question Period –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. J. Brown: I thought you were saying everybody was trying to stand up. You were accusing them all of trying to stand up answering questions (Indistinct) –

Speaker: There's no debate amongst members.

Mr. J. Brown: Well, we got to keep the record straight.

Mr. Myers: You can straighten the record if you can stand up from the glue you have all over your hands.

Mr. J. Brown: (Indistinct) they all want to answer questions, or none of them want to answer them. (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: Anyway, in the Christmas season I think you sign your happy Christmas cards and I'll continue on this debate.

Mr. J. Brown: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: The thing with it is it's quite telling. Caucus revolts happen all the time. I sense you're in the middle of one over there –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. Myers: I really do. You're the only one laughing that way. Everyone else put their head down. Again –

An Hon. Member: You guys are going in eight different directions.

Mr. Myers: – something that I would say quite well –

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: You'd be surprised at the conversations that are had in the lunchroom when you're not standing there, Premier.

Ms. Compton: (Indistinct) we all have a mind of our own.

Mr. Myers: Do you know what? The public trust in government is at an all-time low. It's not just here in Canada. You don't have to look too far to see what's happening around the world. I sense that you fellows are ignoring it, but I'm certainly not.

When you watch what happened over Brexit and then you watch Trump get elected, you have to wonder if people are sick of the same old same old, the old-fashioned government, we'll tell you what's good for you, we'll never challenge and come up with anything new or exciting –

Premier MacLauchlan: You're following Trump. You've been saying lock 'em up all session.

Mr. Myers: No, I haven't been saying anything about Trump, though I think that it's time we drain the swamps here. That's what this motion is about.

I do think that it's time for government to really take a clear stand against types of corruption that have been so rife in this government since 2007. It's time for the current government, the government of the day and the Premier of the day, to stand up and say: We don't condone this and we're going to come clean. Not to hide behind the auditor generals and say: Read the Auditor General's report, and if it's not in there, too bad. To come to the House and say: I'm not answering anything today because I don't have to. That's not responsible government.

That's not the type of government that Islanders voted for on May 4th, 2015. That's not the type of government that they were promised when the Premier said: I don't do business this way. That's not the kind of government that Islanders are willing to accept anymore. I honestly believe that. They're looking for something different. They're looking for something way different. They don't want the same old same old.

I think that one of the big eye-openers for me that's a lot closer to home besides Brexit and Trump was the results of the plebiscite this fall. If that's not a clear indicator that people aren't happy with what they currently have, regardless of the voter turnout, then I don't know what is.

It's something that, while I'm still not convinced that a system of voting will help us unless we have rules and government that actually wants to be transparent and accountable, it should be something that we're all looking at and saying: Yeah, maybe it's time that we pull up our socks, and maybe it's time that in Question Period we answer questions.

Question Period this fall, other than asking questions, most days I was really quiet, which wouldn't be in the norm for me in other years, but I want my questions answered. It's important to me. When I get

up in the morning and I know I'm asking questions I really want them answered. I read the stuff that's – the Twitter and Facebook stuff about what's going on in here. People are saying: Why won't they answer questions? How does the minister stand up and just answer something that was completely different than was asked?

Not everybody is like that. I want to give credit to the minister of environment who stood up and answered questions right since he has been elected into Cabinet. He stands up and just answers the questions.

That's all we want. I mean, come on and answer the questions. That's what all Islanders want. That's how you're going to get respect on the government's side. If you're not doing anything bad, then answer the question. If you truly feel like you're doing what's best for Islanders, then stand up and say so. Tell us why. Tell Islanders why. You'll get a lot more respect from Islanders doing that than you will pretending I asked something else, or pretending that another member asked something else, or answering a question from four questions ago because that's what you're comfortable doing. This isn't what politics should be.

You know what? The questions I had today were easy. They were easy questions. The Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning did answer one of them. He told me that it costs \$8,000 for the meal, which was great. At least we know. It's – oh, I do have the receipt.

That's so easy. Just get up and say that. There was nothing in my questions. Okay, I do want to know why somebody is being instructed to bill through another vendor to a different department. I do want to know that because I do think it's important. I do think Islanders deserve to know. If there was a simple answer for it that's the end of it, it's answered. I don't have to ask it five times, or in the case of whose email was deleted, I probably asked that 14 times this fall, give or take, maybe more. Not once have I gotten the answer.

The answer I've gotten was: You'll have to ask the Auditor General. Who is putting the Auditor General under the bus? You guys are saying that we are. Yet you're saying that she has the answers and only she should

have to answer them. I don't know. It's not my job to decide. It's Islanders' jobs to decide those things. I think the 18% drop in the poll is a pretty clear indicator of how they're feeling right now, and I don't blame them.

I've said it in the House before, and I'll say it again: I felt like when the Premier became leader of the Liberal Party, from a sheer political perspective, I thought, uh-oh, as did many others, because I thought here's a guy, who has got a great resumé, a great background –

Ms. Compton: He's going to be different.

Mr. Myers: He's going to be different. It's going to make it very hard for us. I think that's what is wrong. I think that's why Islanders are upset. They don't like to be duped, and I don't like to be either. It's not even often that I'm wrong about things like that, and I was far wrong on the Premier. The expectations were so high and the actuals were so low. That's why Islanders are upset.

When I talk to hardcore Liberals in my district, yeah, they'll still vote Liberal. I'm not naïve. I don't think they're going to vote for me, not even for a second –

Mr. MacEwen: Some of them will.

Mr. Myers: – but if they're mad. If they are as mad as they are now, that's not good for your brand. When the people who are labelled Liberal are the ones leading the discussion in the coffee shop against you, that's not good for your brand, that's not good for your brand at all. It's a long fall to the bottom, and it's a long climb back up when branded Liberals are speaking that poorly of you. Will they vote for you (Indistinct)? Of course they will. When the time comes will they work for you? Of course they will. When the time comes, but no one will forget what they said because it means a lot more coming from them than it does coming from a Tory because it's completely unexpected that they'd be the one saying it, and they'd be the ones leading the charge and they'd be the ones having that discussion.

I feel bad for Islanders because as each year passes we're getting further and further

away from what I would term as responsible government. We're getting further and further away from a government that's there for the people. The gap between the people and government is growing. When the minister of economic development gets up today and talks about their loan portfolio, like Islanders had nothing to ever do with it, the gap grows. Every time there is a photo-op for a school or for a manor or any infusion of money into a business and it's a bunch of mucky-mucks in a suit, you're getting further and further away from the people because you're acting like it's your money.

If it's a corporation and they're making an announcement, then that's great because it is their money and they're reinvesting into their business and that's fantastic. When it's the taxpayers' money, you need to make it well known that it's not you doing it, it's the taxpayers doing it. You may be deciding who gets it, you may be picking winners and losers still because that's what Liberals do, but it's still the taxpayers' money.

Anyways, to finish off, I do believe this is a very strong motion and it's strong in the terms that that this is a summation of the work of the fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly. This ties it up into a tidy little bow that we could all get behind. We've read these very things each and every day. We know the records act was broken, we know that the *Financial Administration Act* was broken. We know that you've lost Islanders' trust. We know that it needs to be condemned. We also know that while a former Premier and his finance minister Wes Sheridan were at the root of it, there are current members here today that were also involved. I'd hazard to guess that the very minister that's been given the responsibility to clean up from the auditor's mess was one of them because he was there. He was there right in the middle of it as it was coming to its end.

The auditor has been very clear that there are specific cases of conflict of interest. That's something that we can all get behind. There are former senior government members who've been found by the auditor to be at this conflict. That's something that we can all get behind. There are former senior government members who've been

found by the auditor to be at this conflict. That's something that we can all get behind.

These are the things that need to be fixed and that's all this motion is saying. Look, it's all agreeable facts, it's all straight from the auditor's report. I don't know why the minister of economic development thought he was against it. He must not have read it because it's just a statement of facts as outlined by the very Auditor General that he said we're putting under the bus because we don't think she's doing her job.

If anyone votes against this – a vote for this is a vote for the work of the Auditor General. A vote against this is a vote against the Auditor General because this just lays out the auditor's report. That's all this is. If you vote against this motion –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: – you're the ones against the Auditor General. If you vote for it – like over here we'll do – this is a glowing endorsement of the auditor, a glowing endorsement in the work that she's done. This House saying that we're going to get behind here and do what she says and make sure that we condemn it, we clean it up once and for all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really felt that I needed to rise and speak to this motion because I think it is an important motion. I wanted to make four or five points that came to my mind when I was thinking about this motion and its importance.

I wanted to start with going all the way back to the last general election in the spring of 2015. This was the second time I had run seeking election and I made it around to every door in the district, although I had to knock on doors sometimes in the early hours of the morning when no one was there, they were at work.

One thing that really struck me was the difference in attitude from the 2011 general

election to the 2015 general election. In the 2015 election when I knocked on the door people were really down on politicians. They didn't care what party I was. If I was a politician they're like: You're all no good, you're doing nothing for the Island, you're all about lining your own pockets, I don't even want to let you in the door. This didn't happen once or twice, this is 10, 15 doors. This speaks directly to the confidence of people in our government as a whole on Prince Edward Island and what has been happening through years and years. This whole egaming scandal is a perfect example of why people have lost confidence and, in many ways, lost trust in politicians.

I wanted to come to my second point, and that's people out on Prince Edward Island, the voters on PEI, Islanders, they want to see consequences when they see wrongdoing. This is exactly what they're not seeing with egaming. The Auditor General has come out with the report. The report says the government broke all kinds of rules, there are very few actual new rules needed, but there are no consequences.

This brings me to my third point. This is probably what I'm hearing most from Islanders right now and probably what hits me hardest. This is the cover-up of the current government of the egaming scandal. It's very simply a blatant cover-up. I'm just going to use two examples that speak directly to that point. This first one is what has been happening throughout this entire session. We've heard the question, time and time again, the Auditor General says there were emails deleted, the Premier agrees that emails were deleted, we know there were emails from two individuals that were deleted. That information has all been confirmed by the Auditor General and the Premier. This government simply refuses to let Islanders know whose emails were deleted. That's a perfect example because it's such a simple question and it's easy to understand. It's really hard for any Islander to believe that this government does not know whose emails were deleted. This is what we've heard time and time again.

We've had everybody from the minister of education to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, the Premier, the minister of transportation I

even think took a stab at it, the Minister of Finance, stand up and say why it was not relevant whose emails were deleted. We actually did hear the Premier say at one point that he did not know whose emails were deleted. It's this sort of cover-up that really gets right down into the heart of the trust issues and the confidence of Islanders in their government.

The second instance was what I feel is just the deplorable actions of the Public Accounts Committee into nine witnesses to be called before the committee. I know I've stood and talked about this in this House before. But time and time again, the Liberal majority on the Public Accounts Committee has voted down motions to bring forward witnesses. To add insult to injury, the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning I believe even stood up today and said this is an attack on the Auditor General, and this shows that you don't have confidence in the Auditor General because you want to see other witnesses come to standing committee.

I fully believe, and I believe many members of the Public Accounts Committee believe, that those witnesses have valuable information to add to the discussion above and beyond what the Auditor General has brought forward, and indeed this is purely a method of blocking the truth and of covering up this egaming scandal.

That brings me to my next point. I wanted to talk about the Auditor General and the great job that she is doing in reviewing the issues that she's been asked to look at in this province. She has a very tough job because she really has to try and remain politically neutral. In many cases she's asked to work with incomplete information. She's asked to go places and ask for information where she knows people won't want to talk to her and don't want to provide the information, but she perseveres. She has to go through thousands and thousands of documents and she has staff that help her do that, and she perseveres and she does this, and she finds out things that Islanders really need to know, things that Islanders would not know if she had not done her great work and her research.

At the same time, and this is an important point as well, I think the Auditor General

really takes her role as a representative of Prince Edward Island very seriously. I think when she writes her reports she wants to make sure she doesn't damage the reputation of Islanders, and that's another reason why her job is so hard, because sometimes when there's damning facts in the Auditor General's reports it's hard to write those in such a way that it doesn't hurt Islanders' reputation.

We've heard again today about the article in the *Globe and Mail* and these sorts – this egaming scandal is national news, and it is hurting this Island's reputation. I would implore the government to really address the issue, bring out the facts, and get this off of the Island's plate, because it's tarnishing our reputation as Prince Edward Islanders.

Another point I wanted to make – and this has been made before but I think it's very important – when I look across there and around the room here, and I look at the – this current government, there are 18 members of the Liberal caucus that form the government caucus, and there are 13 out of 18 members that were here and experienced and were sitting members at the time that this egaming scandal was going on. I cannot believe that this scandal was not discussed in caucus, much less in Cabinet. There's lots of Cabinet ministers that were also Cabinet ministers during that time. I'm wondering, when I look across there, how some of you folks who were here during that time can't stand up for Islanders and say: Look, this is what I know about the truth and I want to get it out.

I don't understand the attitude of covering that up. I don't know if it's loyalty to the party or what it is, but please, if you know something, come out with it. Don't hide it, please.

In fact, we even have former Cabinet ministers that are still members here – Cabinet ministers like the Minister of Finance, for example, who had a portfolio that was (Indistinct) or the Minister of Health and Wellness had a portfolio that was relevant during the egaming scandal times.

We were told at standing committee that these ministers are not even required to answer to their own departments from the time when they were ministers. We were

told that it's the current minister that has to answer to the actions –

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Mr. Trivers: – of the department at that time.

Speaker: Hon. members, the hour has been called.

This House is in recess till 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 24th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 24, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2)*, Bill No. 56, in Committee.

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

Speaker: Hon. members, this is already in Committee and the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot was the Chair, so I'd ask him to come back down and 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 intituled *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2)*.

While we continue discussion, I don't have anybody on my speakers list.

Leader of the Opposition: My understanding was I asked (Indistinct) question.

Premier MacLauchlan: May I have permission to invite a stranger to the floor?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Can you state your name for the record, please?

Steven Dowling Director: Steven Dowling, acting director for the financial services division within the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

Leader of the Opposition: The last time (Indistinct) the Premier was, I asked for some clarification.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you for the question. It is easy to see why the question would arise.

When it's used in relation to powers or rights that are monetary, the term injury – and it's spelled out in the page that I passed out – is what you might call a term of art in the employment standards world. It's consistent with the legislation as it has been in Prince Edward Island and as you would find in its direct counterpart in Nova Scotia.

The legislation itself provides a number of substantive rights such as the minimum wage and paid holidays, compassionate leave, etc., even provisions regarding a bounced cheque. They all relate to the payment of a worker and they're basic standards for non-unionized workers.

Then the provisions that we're dealing with here are what you would call administrative powers or remedial provisions. A remedial provision can't add any rights or create any new substantive obligations beyond those that have been spelled out in the balance of the legislation. The term injury has been used in this legislation in order not to, you might say, narrow what is the collection of rights for which a worker might say that an employer has not paid up.

Leader of the Opposition: I understand. Thank you.

Carry the bill.

Mr. Myers: I have a question.

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

Mr. Myers: It was brought to my attention that the *Employment Standards Act (No. 2)* that's been on the floor here a couple of times, and the minister of transportation had brought to the floor earlier wording changes in the people with ability or disabilities parking act, however it was said.

But anyway, it was brought to my attention that you're still using the word handicap in this act. Was it your intention to also remove that while we have it on the floor? Just to update it.

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

Ms. Biggar: What Hannah's bill did, if you recall, is change the wording from the word disabled to accessible. That was in regard to parking itself.

Mr. Myers: So I'm just wondering if we're willing to change the wording in the act because it's not a word from 2016, while we have it on the floor.

Premier MacLauchlan: It's probably something that should go back to Legislative Counsel to see how that language is used or what might replace it. But let me take that question back, not for the purpose of passing or not passing this bill, but it may be something that Legislative Counsel wants to take a look at for a further amendment with a later bill.

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

Mr. Myers: Just one other question, then. When you do that would it be something you'd be able to do, go through some other government legislation when you can update it all maybe in the spring?

Premier MacLauchlan: It's certainly a good question to refer to Legislative Counsel and that may well warrant a look to see where – if the language (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: Thank you.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Premier MacLauchlan: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2).*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Premier MacLauchlan: 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.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, that the 18th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 18, *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act*, Bill No. 53, ordered for second reading.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, that the said bill be read a second time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act*, Bill No. 53, read a second time.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, 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 ask the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road to come down and chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

I think the bill is fairly self explanatory. Perhaps an overview from the minister?

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

Mr. MacDonald: May I have permission to take someone on the floor?

Chair: (Indistinct) could you just state your name and position, please, for the Hansard?

Shannon Burke Director: Shannon Burke, director of finance with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Basically, it is minor changes. What we're doing is limiting board members who are appointed for one additional term only. We're changing the words. In other words they'd only have two terms as opposed to continue to reappoint, and reappoint.

The other thing is when we make changes, we want to make changes to the financial side of things, in regards – do we want to have financial statements in prior to June 30th to line up with the *Financial Administration Act*? The reason, they'll say, you know you could say that we're keeping it longer, but the way it reports right now they're not audited financial statements. If we do it this date they're audited, so it's better for everybody.

Chair: The Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

Mr. R. Brown: No (Indistinct).

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Mr. MacDonald: I move the title.

Chair: *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. MacDonald: I move the enacting clause.

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Chair: Shall it carry? Carried.

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

Speaker (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 25th order of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: Order No. 25 *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 call on the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton to 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*.

Do you wish to bring a stranger on the floor?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, please, permission for that.

Chair: Agreement?

Could you please identify yourself for the record, Ms. Murphy?

Samantha Murphy Manager: Thank you. Samantha Murphy, manager of Municipal Affairs.

Leader of the Opposition: Have you ever been here before?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, Chair, thank you.

Instead of continuing page by page on this bill I'd like to suggest that, perhaps, hon. members with questions, we just go to those hon. members and they can ask their set of questions, and then we move on. I think it

would help speed up the process and keep things going.

Chair: Do any hon. members have any issue proceeding in that manner?

Mr. Mitchell: I have no objections.

Mr. R. Brown: Ready to vote.

Mr. MacEwen: Minister, are you okay with that?

Mr. Mitchell: I have no objections to that.

Chair: We were last on page 65.

Any questions, hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald?

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

On page 68, form of signature, 156(4), where: "A signature required for the purposes of subsection (1) may be printed, lithographed, electronically added or otherwise reproduced if authorized by council." I just wanted to commend the minister and his staff on a job well done. I really like to see that electronic signature added to the bill.

On page 69 it talks about how councils may invest money of the municipality. In 157(1)(e) it talks about "investments prescribed in the regulations."

I was wondering if those regulations already exist, and if they do, are community, economic development business tax credits included in that? Are businesses eligible?

Mr. Mitchell: Actually, they aren't in the regulations. Of course, the new regulations are not done. It's just here as a provision. It could be added in regulation if need be.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I would just like to suggest that the regulations definitely give due consideration to local investments. Especially those that can qualify for the CEDB, as they call it; the Community Economic Development Business tax credit. That's my input there.

Mr. Mitchell: We'll look at that, hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Page 71, (Indistinct). I can move right to there.

Chair: Thank you, hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: In section 160(2) it talks about the ability of a council to "establish tax rate groups in the municipality for the purposes of (1)." In other words, for the purposes of taxation. I know that the municipality of agriculture had some concerns that farmland should not be taxed the same as other pieces of land. They wanted to make sure the ability was there for municipalities to give them different tax rates.

Does this clause, indeed, address that concern?

Mr. Mitchell: It's there, and it remains there, yeah.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: All right. Moving to page 72 there is a section that talks about the tourism accommodation levy. Really, I was wondering about the powers given the municipalities there. I was wondering if they will have the ability to not charge the tourism accommodation levy on Airbnb accommodation operations if they so choose.

Samantha Murphy: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, it currently exists in the existing legislation. It's a carryover item. They can determine their own bylaws whether it's utilized or not. I'm not aware of provision from tourism to have that as a necessity, but I think they can make their own bylaws to handle that need.

Mr. Trivers: That's fine, thank you.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Page 73, so this is 161(9), it says here that essentially the municipality is going to be responsible for collecting a tourism accommodation levy, and the operator is responsible for providing that money, and if they don't they can charge interest and put a lien on the property and this sort of thing.

I was wondering: How would a municipality actually track and find out whether a tourism accommodation had paid the levy or not? Chair, the reason for this line of questioning is I wanted to make sure there's a level playing field for tourism accommodations.

As we know, services like Airbnb have come up that allow you to easily put your home up for rent, and I just wanted to make sure it's a level playing field. There's some people maybe who are charged the tourism accommodation levy, some people that aren't. That's not fair.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah. The municipality would ask the tourism business to provide that information of nights used to verify that.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism has a comment.

Mr. MacDonald: Basically right now everyone that operates a tourism accommodation on PEI, roofed accommodation and campground, has to be inspected and are licensed by law by the *Tourism Industry Act*. It would be recorded through the municipality who is inspected and who's not and who is registered and who is not. Airbnb would be no different than any other roofed accommodation.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: So on page 84 in section 183 – and it actually extends to page 185 as well – it talks about sewer and water and how it's charged. Actually, on page 85 and section 185 it says: “For the purposes of this Act, unless a council, by bylaw, provides otherwise, where sewer or water mains run along the land of any person, that person is deemed to receive those services despite the fact that the sewer or water mains are not

physically connected by lateral lines to any residence, building or other structure located on the land of that person.”

This is an issue that has been raised to me in my district. There are people who have disconnected their buildings from sewer, and they're still being charged the rates and they feel that they really shouldn't be charged the rates because they're not actually using the service. I was wondering if you could comment on whether you've heard any feedback on that from people or –

Mr. Mitchell: You know what? I haven't. That exists today with the old act, and I know in municipalities if it runs by your residence, whatever you're automatically charged, it's all calculated in whether (Indistinct) infrastructure tools, but I haven't had anybody specifically say that they were opposed to it.

Mr. Trivers: Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: When you rewrote this act and incorporated others acts into it, this is an example where the municipalities, through the federation of municipalities, may have had their say, but I'm wondering if you had any consultation with residents who are not involved with the municipal process per se as to what they thought. Because I would think it was only fair, right? If you're not using the service you shouldn't be charged. I wonder if you could explain why that would be left in.

Mr. Mitchell: It's a fairly significant input of dollars to get these service lines there. I'm sure when they're doing their costing out they use each property as a part of recouping costs of that. That's the only reason that I could explain to you. There's really no better way to put it. If it's there and it's usable, you're deemed to be charged for the usage.

Mr. Trivers: Okay. Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I'm not going to propose any amendment for this or anything like that, but

I do want to raise that concern where there are residents of municipalities who have the service running beside – well, as it says here, “...despite the fact that the sewer or water mains are not physically connected by lateral lines to any residence, building or other structure located on the land of that person,” but they are still are being charged for that. I would like to raise that concern and maybe that’s something you can address in regulations or –

Mr. Mitchell: I can, but I’d suggest any individual you were speaking to bring it to the municipal mayor or the council for discussion on that at a council meeting. Maybe there would be an interest from a council specifically to review that or disallow those charges because they’re in good shape financially or something like that.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, minister.

Chair.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: There was a case in one of the municipalities in my district where, in fact, the owner of the property placed an old toilet on his property on Route 2 to protest the fact that this was in place, and he left it there throughout tourism season for an entire year or more. This is why I believe this issue maybe should be looked at again.

All right. Thank you, Chair.

Chair: (Indistinct) question (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: I do have another question on page 87 unless you want to (Indistinct).

Chair: Go right ahead.

Mr. Trivers: So on page 87 it talks in sections 192, 193, and 194 about the ability of municipalities to expropriate land.

Again, in one of my municipalities I was in a situation where we have land under a pond that is owned by a private individual. There’s a number of issues that arise because of that. Would this legislation give the municipality the ability to expropriate that land?

Mr. Mitchell: Under the pond?

Samantha Murphy: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, there’d have to be a municipal purpose, a reason why they would want that particular land. Of course, deeds and everything would have to line up to verify whether the landowner indeed does own that land if they’re suggesting they do.

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: These clauses just don’t give the right to the municipality to go and expropriate land sort of at will without having to provide any particular reason for it other than they think it would be better for the good of the community?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah. Typically, they don’t look for land underwater. They’re looking for vacant lots that they need for developing their municipality or whatever the purpose is that they expropriate those lands. Of course, the owners of those lands, if there’s anything of value on it, they get compensated at the value that they are worth at that moment in time, but they don’t typically go looking for underwater things, I don’t think.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Again, in this particular municipality this is a very controversial issue. The landowner that owns the land, the way the deed is worded, it’s the amount of land covered by the pond when the water is at a certain level on the dam and all these sorts of things. I just see potential for conflict there and I just wanted to see if you had thought that through or consulted with anyone on it.

Mr. Mitchell: I guess municipalities would have to legally pursue – do they – that everything is lined up that they challenged, I suppose.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Done?

Mr. Trivers: Page 89.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, page 89.

Mr. Trivers: On page 89 in (201) it talks about proposed local improvements. I just wondered if that would include unsightly properties and if the municipality would have the power to look after unsightly properties or would they be covered under provincial regulations and laws.

Samantha Murphy Manager: Municipalities do have the authority to regulate property maintenance but they're not required to. If they don't, then it falls under provincial statute. This is more designed for situations where there might be – sidewalks are often an example, where part of the municipality might want to have sidewalks built. It's not on the general list of priorities for the municipality so it's not going to be funded out of the general taxes. But that area that would be the direct beneficiary of the service agrees to pay an additional fee to have that service put in so they can do projects that a certain area wishes to see (Indistinct) place that others don't want.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, thank you.

Page 90, a quick one.

Chair: Page 91. Okay, go ahead hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: On page 91 it talks about management and maintenance of all streets owned within the boundaries of a municipality. This is a concern that has been raised to me by municipalities, especially ones that would be deemed rural municipalities subsequent to the act getting Royal Assent. Would they be responsible under this legislation for the maintenance of their roads including, for example, the plowing of their roads in the wintertime?

Mr. Mitchell: If you noticed, hon. members, it's for streets that are owned by the municipality. In some cases I believe there are municipalities that the province does (Indistinct) contractor for those municipalities to go in and clean those streets for them. Some have private contractors as well and they look after those costs.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: In a rural municipality that would exist after this legislation gets Royal Assent, would those roads be owned by the province or by the municipality? Then at what point would they change hands?

Samantha Murphy Manager: They're owned by the province. Unless there was some agreement between the province and the municipality and the minister responsible for roads, all that responsibility would remain with the province. It's cities and the old towns.

Mr. Mitchell: In some cases the municipalities do get a grant from the provincial government. As you see it shows up in the financing from the Department of Finance. That's what they use to utilize those street cleanups.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to raise that concern that the municipalities are worried that they're going to have additional expenses they have to look after after this legislation comes in. It sounds like that will not be the case, so thank you.

I have more questions.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Page 95. This is 216(3): "The municipality is liable to the Minister for the costs of an inspection, as determined by the Minister."

I'm just concerned, again, when it comes to the cost, the municipalities are already strapped for cash and any additional costs are a burden. This gives the minister the ability to ask for an inspection and then the municipality is liable to the minister for the cost of said inspection. I was just wondering on the thought process here. Why wouldn't the province just flip the cost of the inspection if the minister is the one asking for it?

Mr. Mitchell: These, again, they're like a worst case scenario, if you're going to do something regarding conflict of interest of that nature.

Samantha Murphy Manager: This is really if there is something truly off the rails and the minister has to go in, in most cases with an inquiry you're looking at almost a judicial inquiry so your expenses are different. The province may decide that it can be held, it can be taken care of within the provincial infrastructure, but if they have to do something more extreme –

Mr. Mitchell: Something typically outside of a normal box.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: As long as this would rarely be used, then, as a last-case scenario, then I'm okay with that.

Thank you.

Page 99, Chair.

Chair: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Trivers: On page 99 it talks about bylaw enforcement, offences, and liability. There's a whole part there with the division that starts here on this page.

Once again, I just wanted to verify that bylaw enforcement – the costs can be shared between municipalities if they came to an agreement. Again, it's an additional cost that I know municipalities are looking at and they're concerned about that.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, absolutely. We would encourage that. There are new bylaws that are existing in three of the bigger municipalities of Cornwall, Charlottetown, and Stratford that are looking at working together on.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Page 116. Just a quick question about how – these are amendments – actually I'm not entirely sure how to read that. It has to do with the *Pesticides Control Act*. I believe it's an amendment to the

Pesticides Control Act in order to bring it in line with the new *Municipal Government Act*.

Does this give – well I'll read it, 276(2)(q.1): “prescribing the types, applications and uses of non-domestic pesticides that may be dealt with in a bylaw made by a council pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*...” Does this allow all municipalities to ban cosmetic pesticides regardless of what's happening at the provincial level?

Samantha Murphy Manager: In 2014 we amended municipal legislation to grant municipalities the authority to regulate certain cosmetic pesticides. Part 7 of this act is much more general in the way the powers are framed, but we don't want to get into using this piece of legislation to really get into all the subject matter legislation.

All of those parameters that were put around pesticide control in the *Municipalities Act*, *Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act*, the *Summerside act*, will be moved into the *Pesticides Control Act*. The intent is for it to be the same restrictions about agriculture use, golf courses – all those pieces that are there today could just be moved over to other legislation.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: If I may, for example, a rural municipality after this act receives Royal Assent, would I have the right then to go in and ban cosmetic pesticides? Or specify regulations around pesticides in general?

Samantha Murphy Manager: It will be provincial regulations that will be put in place under the *Pesticides Control Act*. They have the authority today and so they're just going to bring it over.

Mr. Mitchell: It does allow it through the pesticide act currently which came (Indistinct) Legislature in 2013.

Mr. Trivers: Oh it does.

Thank you, minister. I do have more.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: I'm looking at page 118 and this is the rate or rates of tax that may be approved by a council under 281(6)(2.03) "...shall consist only of one commercial rate and one non-commercial rate for each tax rate group."

The reason I'm concerned about this is, again, the federation of agriculture is worried about the impact of incorporation on farms. This act definitely encourages larger municipalities based on the thresholds. If tax rates can only have one commercial rate and one non-commercial rate, I'm wondering does that limit the ability of a municipality to give us a special rate if they need to for different types of agricultural production, for example.

Samantha Murphy Manager: Actually, with these changes what we've done is provided greater flexibility to create more. Typically, you only see commercial and non-commercial. This will allow municipalities to set a great array of tax rate groups. We're changing the *Real Property Tax Act* to match our changes. In fact, municipalities could now create an agriculture rate to have a rebated rate or lower rate for that particular group.

What this does, it says for the purposes of administering it at the provincial level where we do the bills and send them out. It's too complicated to have multiple agricultural rates within one municipality so you'd only have one rate for that group.

Mr. Mitchell: Currently, those agriculture rates are different because they already exist within municipalities now where farms are actually within boundaries of municipalities. Their rates are already set up to be different.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Just to be clear. Within a tax rate group there can only be one commercial rate and one non-commercial rate, but you can have multiple tax rate groups, so that will allow municipalities to do what they need to do and protect, for example, agricultural and that.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you. Let me just double-check here.

Chair: Go ahead, hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Page 123. This is Schedule B, it's talking about the city of Summerside and how they're able to, essentially, still have their own electricity utility – the *Electric Power Act* and *Renewable Energy Act* that they passed in the council – in the city of Summerside.

What I was wondering was: Does this act allow all municipalities potentially to generate their own electricity, and if they wanted to, sort of have their own electrical utility? The reason I say that is I know that, again, in my district and other districts on the Island there's different cases where there's a possibility of using dams to generate hydroelectric power. Right now it gets complicated in the negotiations with Maritime Electric, for example, and in fact Maritime Electric can just say: Sorry, we're not going to let you do it. And that's it, that's the end of the story, the way I understand it.

Mr. Mitchell: I guess –

Mr. Trivers: I wanted to find out if there's an ability for – if a municipality wanted to, could they actually set up their own utility and do that?

Mr. Mitchell: The easiest way to answer your question is there's nothing in these acts that blocks that from happening. Currently we have the two power suppliers in the Summerside Electric and the Maritime Electric. There's other, I believe, legislation that –

An Hon. Member: Electric utility act.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, the electric utility act that deems that that's who provides power in Prince Edward Island. That would have to be in negotiation differently, but there's nothing in this act that would block that from beginning, starting, and actually coming to fruition.

But this particular Schedule B, because it's incorporating the old Summerside act, it has

to be provided for specifically within this act as a new schedule.

Mr. Trivers: Okay. Chair?

Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Trivers: I do have some general questions. I have four general questions I wanted to ask.

Mr. Mitchell: Go ahead.

Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Chair.

Really, these are concerns of the federation of agriculture. First, let me just confirm that you've met with the federation of agriculture and you've had discussions with them about their concerns.

Samantha Murphy Manager: Yes, we have.

Mr. Mitchell: Absolutely, we have.

Mr. Trivers: Okay. Their four main concerns presented to the standing committee were: number one was the security of land and the right to farm that land; number two was they had concerns around the process for change of land use within a municipality; number three, they were concerned about taxation – I think we've already covered off their concerns there in the questions I've already asked; and then number four was the effective level of governance for land zoning.

I think number four and number two, which is their process for change of land use, are very closely related with the zoning and land use.

I just wondered: Do you feel that this act addresses their concerns?

Mr. Mitchell: I've had various discussions in the last year and a half with members from agriculture sectors within the federation. Their concerns are well thought out and brought in a very productive and effective way. We were able to (Indistinct) I feel, in a good manner to give them some confidence in what the future would look like for them.

Taxation is probably one of the major concerns and we're looking at addressing it. We currently have farms that are under municipalities as we speak, and so they're able to talk to some of their own members that are already there.

As far as the ability to farm their land, that's a part of the land use planning that we see in the future of municipalities that good farmland should remain good farmland. We're going to farm generation there to generation there to generation, so that's a part that we try our best to instill in them, that the ability will always be there.

The other parts of protection for their farm, that all of a sudden a subdivision doesn't show up next to their farm with complaints about looking to shut their farm down, so we're trying to ensure that those concerns that they may not be even thinking of today will be protected in the future.

I think I've covered most of it. Sam, do you want to add on if I've missed anything here?

Samantha Murphy Manager: Yes. Some of this will be protected through agricultural legislation right to farm and farm practices. Then, as we work on the provincial land use policies and provincial province-wide development standards, those sort of province-wide interests and priorities will be enshrined.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Mitchell: We're interested in working with the farmers.

Mr. Trivers: It sounds to me like, really, the rules aren't in place yet that will govern this, and I wanted to get an example.

In North Rustico, for example, there are definitely farms within the town of North Rustico right now, like the Dickieson's farm. Then, in fact, there's another Dickieson farm, David Dickieson is just outside the town boundaries, and so are MacNeill's farm, just outside the town boundaries. They're really worried that if the municipality expands and annexes their land they're going to have regulations placed on them that could restrict how they're able to farm. I already even received

complaints about the roads and the fact that there's manure all over the roads because they're spreading manure and the roads are unsafe, these sorts of things.

Are the regulations already in place? Are those rules you're talking about from the department of agriculture protecting those lands already in place or are these things that are still to come?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct).

Samantha Murphy Manager: We have been working on the land use policies. That was the other part of the work from the commissioner Thompson's report and then the Handrahan report, the task force on land use policies. The work is largely completed and we're in the final stages of that. It's also part of what the department's working on right now.

Chair: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Are you concerned at all that we're bringing in the *Municipal Government Act* prior to the land use policies being in place?

Samantha Murphy Manager: I think those same concerns would exist under the existing legislation, and we're just trying to address that at the same time as other work.

Mr. Trivers: Okay, thank you, Chair.

That's all.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Just before you get too excited, I want to go all the way back to page 67, but it won't be long.

Chair: That's what they all say.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Section 153, and this is about municipalities and deficits. Of course, I'm aware that under current legislation municipalities can't run deficits, but there are other jurisdictions where that's possible. In Alberta and I believe it's Quebec municipalities of a certain size can run deficits. I'm just wondering if anybody

asked you, any of the municipalities asked for that leeway, that latitude.

Mr. Mitchell: Hon. member, yes, and of course, it became more prevalent two years ago when 16 feet of snow landed on Prince Edward Island. The provision wasn't there at the time. We're building that in so if you have an extenuating circumstance like a winter like that or some major expense that occurred out of the blue and you have to run the deficit, they will be able to do that in the future. But it has to be under that type of a situation, which is typically why they would be looking to run a deficit (Indistinct).

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Will that be written into the regs, then? Is that where we'll see that?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) there.

Samantha Murphy Manager: It's in 153(2). There's an option for the minister to approve an alternate means of dealing with the deficits, so rather than –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Oh, that's what that's referring to. Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Page 76, section 169. This is about procurement. I'm just wondering – I think I know the answer to this – but do municipalities have to follow the Atlantic Procurement Agreement as provinces do?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, they do.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, so, I mean, those are pretty complicated agreements. How would you expect a municipality to have the capacity to work their way through something like that and comply with it?

Samantha Murphy Manager: Some of that we'll try to build into the regulations, just as standards, and we'll have template bylaws to help and guides for them as well.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Do the same limits as apply to provinces apply to municipalities

for services and for goods? I can't remember what they are – 10,000, is it, for goods and 50,000 for services?

Samantha Murphy Manager: They're similar. There's some areas that they're exempted from, that just don't apply to them.

Mr. Mitchell: We could probably get you more specifics on that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: I think there are reductions there.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Page 77, section 172. This is on audited financial statements. Oh no, I'm sorry, forget that. That was already asked. There's a few that the hon. member there covered that I have on my list.

Page 79 – this is on audits – section 174(7), the minister can override the municipality in the interest of the community. That concerns me. It seems to me that the municipality would have a better idea of what its needs are. Why would the minister feel that he or she could determine the best interests of the community above and beyond the council?

Mr. Mitchell: Again, hon. member, that's to –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: The last resort.

Mr. Mitchell: – take your worst-case scenario –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I knew you were going to say that.

Mr. Mitchell: – last resort. Yeah. They are just built-in provisions. We anticipate everything will be smooth and effective, but if we do have that particular situation that does arise, which hopefully never does, that's there.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That's there. That's the last resort.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Page 81. Now, when the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald was speaking he – a part of the discussions was on pesticide bylaws. That was at the very end. It was how the regulations would affect the pesticide act.

Looking in section 180 on page 82, subsections (k) and (l) refer to cosmetic pesticides there. I'm just wondering is there any change in this new *Municipal Government Act* in municipalities' powers in that regard?

Samantha Murphy Manager: The way the whole section under powers, this section 180, is set-up, the current legislation is very prescriptive. You can do black fly and mosquito eradication, but you can't do greenfly.

All of this is much wider, more broadly framed. They can do pesticide control – the regulations under the *Pesticides Control Act* through bylaws and the domestic (Indistinct) and domestic animals, insects and birds.

What we've done, as we have mentioned, is we have done that concurrent amendment to allow them to put the details that are in the existing legislation under the *Pesticides Control Act*. It should, at the end of the day, be the same.

We need to enable the authority here, but the details will be in the other legislation.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, I get you. Thank you for that explanation.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thanks, Chair.

Page 85, section 188. This is on expropriation. (1) talks about giving municipalities the right to expropriate land within their boundaries. I get that, unless it's owned by First Nations. (2), though, gives them the power to expropriate land outside the boundaries with some restrictions for use for municipal utilities.

I'm wondering whether that would extend – like how – what are the limits of outside their jurisdiction? Does it have to be contiguous to the municipality, or could they expropriate land a distance away? It just wasn't clear in the wording.

Samantha Murphy Manager: We didn't put any restrictions on where it is. In most cases where they would be looking at that would be for water or sewer type situation. It'll be largely restricted by economics.

Mr. Mitchell: It may not be contiguous, though.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Mr. Mitchell: As it exists today, in some municipalities.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I just wanted clarity on that. I don't have a problem with it. I just wanted to know.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Page 90, sections 203 and 204. This is on local improvement bylaws. The only type of public engagement written into the act is public hearings.

I'm just wondering what if council wanted to have a broader, a different type of engagement, like an online survey, or a plebiscite, for example. Would the way this is worded allow a municipality to carry out that kind of survey?

Samantha Murphy Manager: Yes, they can do additional. This is minimum standard.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: This is the minimum?

Samantha Murphy Manager: Yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay. That's good.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I had a question on streets, but that was covered also.

Page 93, Part 8 – Powers of the Minister. There are a whole lot of them. Actually, it starts on page 93, but it goes over onto page 94.

The minister has oversight over having municipalities audited, having them inspected, ordering an inquiry, inspecting bank accounts. Of course, the municipality

is responsible for the costs, as the hon. member mentioned earlier in a different section.

Again, I know what you're going to say here, minister, that it's a last resort. I'm wondering why so much oversight. Why not allow the municipality to manage their own affairs?

Mr. Mitchell: It is, indeed, hon. member, last resort. I read out examples last evening, or the last day I was in the chair, of other municipalities that had situations that occurred. You're just trying to cover all the bases for something that could possibly happen. Hopefully, it never happens, and that's the real legal reason.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So that sort of intrusion, or oversight, you don't imagine ever using that on a regular basis? This is –

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, sure.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – an extraordinary circumstance?

Samantha Murphy Manager: It is for extraordinary circumstances. Essentially, municipalities create powers that are delegated to them by the province –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Samantha Murphy Manager: – the provincial authorities. There is a responsibility on the province, at the end of the day, to ensure that those authorities are being undertaken properly.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Samantha Murphy Manager: Existing legislation has one provision for the minister, that is: If things are not working, if the municipality, if the council, is inoperable or not working in the best interests of residents, the minister can dismiss council, appoint trustees, essentially, until a new election.

We only have one tool. What we found is in many situations it wasn't flexible or sophisticated enough to be able to just address the scenario that we were dealing

with. This gives us a broader range depending on the severity of the issue. It's more sensitive.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I get that. Thank you.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Page 96, sections 219 and 220.

This is exactly what you were just talking about actually, Samantha, the minister's right to order a council to take action or to appoint a supervisor, or boot out a council member or appoint replacement council members. Most of that I have no problem with.

I'm wondering whether, in the replacement of the council member, that should not be something that would be done by the entire council rather than by the minister.

Samantha Murphy Manager: Where a council member is dismissed it's a by-election. There would be a public process, a public election, to fill that seat. The minister is not, generally, appointing someone to fill that vacancy.

So we have the first level of intrusion, so to speak, it would be have a supervisor just to go in and help the council and the administration make sure that things are back on track. If it gets to the point where there is no council that can operate, there are certain powers and certain actions that need to be taken by council. The trustee would just be there to make sure that, if a bylaw needs to be passed, if a tax rate needs to be passed, until the municipality is ready to operate with an elected council again.

Again, last case, worst-case scenario.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: On that trusteeship, which is section 221, the minister would decide when the municipality is ready to have any elections. There are no timelines. There's no sort of time limit imposed on how long that trusteeship would last.

Basically, at least the way things are written, it could go on indefinitely. I'm wondering if it's normal not to have a timeline on that. Is

that the way most other jurisdictions have that written in?

Mr. Mitchell: Actually, that's basically a cut-and-paste from other legislation. It's not something that – you know we wouldn't have tried to anything different with, I guess, is the best way to put it.

Samantha Murphy Manager: The province isn't going to be too eager to be running a municipality for very long. The sooner we can have an elected council back in place, the better.

Mr. Mitchell: The trustee certainly wouldn't want to do it for any extended length of time, either. That's a lot of responsibility.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: You wouldn't consider –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Sorry, Chair – writing something in there: until the next scheduled election cycle or something like that? Or you don't feel that's necessary?

Mr. Mitchell: It depends on the situation. Obviously, we have areas, at the moment, that are having trouble filling their councils. To put prescriptive times may work as a negative based on my conversations with some municipalities that are struggling to find new people. I hope that doing business in a different way encourages, perhaps, new people, and perhaps even younger people, to partake a strong interest in their communities.

As it exists today I wouldn't want to put something prescriptive in that could work as a deterrent, too, to keeping a community healthy.

I don't really have a super great answer for you, hon. member. Basically, we just took it from other legislation that works other places. We'd be trying to fill that council as quickly as we could with the right community-minded people to get their things back on track in their regions as quickly and fast as possible.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Page 105, section 239. This is someone who receives an order from a bylaw enforcement officer and they only have seven days unless it's otherwise specified in a bylaw to request a review. That's seems really short to me. Somebody might be away on holiday or somebody might be out west working. Is that a typical timeframe for somebody to challenge a bylaw enforcement, a bylaw infraction on?

Mr. Mitchell: That's what was existing before.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: It's just a cut-and-paste from another jurisdiction.

Mr. Mitchell: From an already existing (Indistinct).

Samantha Murphy Manager: With many of those cases it gets harder the longer it lasts. If you're looking at length of grass a lot of the orders are going to be unsightly premises. The longer you leave it the harder it is to look into the facts of the case. It needs to be addressed quickly.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has a follow up question.

Leader of the Opposition: Would you, as somebody (Indistinct) bylaw adheres, would you be willing to change that to 14? Maybe down the road – I will testify that seven days is short. Prime example would be today I get a bylaw ticket and tomorrow I leave, minister, and I'm heading away for seven days to Cancun.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct).

Leader of the Opposition: I'm just saying down the road maybe.

Mr. Mitchell: I'd be willing to have further discussion with you on that. I wouldn't want that to hold up the bill.

Leader of the Opposition: No.

Mr. Mitchell: That's something I would have no issue for you and I to have a conversation about it down the road and we could bring an amendment in.

Leader of the Opposition: I can honestly relate to that.

Mr. Mitchell: I guess I see both sides, if it's an issue. I get calls that are issues immediately that have to be dealt with pretty immediate too. I see both sides of –

Leader of the Opposition: I'll tell you what I'm thinking about on that is a bylaw parking ticket.

Mr. Mitchell: I'll tell you, I'd be willing to work with you on that in the future.

Leader of the Opposition: I appreciate that.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid on a follow up on 239.

Mr. MacEwen: Sorry, Chair, it's not a follow up.

Chair: If you don't mind, I'll let the hon. Leader of the Third Party go.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Page 109, 253, right at the bottom. This is to do with timeline to sue a municipality. Again, it's a time issue and I'm not sure whether it's standard or whether it's reasonable. But 21 days seems like a fairly short turnaround for me for somebody to assess the damages or the loss (Indistinct) incurred to hire a lawyer and then file a notice of action.

Is that sort of a standard timeframe for legal proceedings?

Samantha Murphy Manager: It is standard but we do, in (2), there are few scenarios where you could ask for extra time if you're injured, if there's a reason that you cannot submit your claim within 21 days, but it is standard.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: So there are provisions for some flexibility there in certain circumstances?

Samantha Murphy Manager: Yes.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Page 110, exemption from seizure of the property, this is section 257(1). I just wanted to check – I wasn't quite sure what this

meant. If I can read the clause: “Except as otherwise provided for in this Act, the personal and real property of a municipality is exempt from forced seizure or sale by any process of law.” I wasn’t quite sure what “any process of law” means.

Samantha Murphy Manager: This is one we left with the lawyers. It is very technical, but it’s about property owned by the municipality and whether it could be repossessed (Indistinct) that sort of (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct).

Samantha Murphy Manager: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: So it is with the legal –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, I feel okay about not understanding that. Would one interpretation of that be that the province can’t expropriate a municipality? Or am I –

Mr. Mitchell: Or repossess for some reason –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Right, yes.

Mr. Mitchell: – when they are trying to do their business, yeah.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: But I know the municipalities are sort of essentially children of the province, but is that one interpretation of that or am I –

Samantha Murphy Manager: I would have to get you more information on that (Indistinct).

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay, I’m good.

My final point, page 111 – you know what? I’m just going to be repeating something I said earlier. I’m done.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, on page 113, Consequential Amendments and Repeals, there’s quite a

list of these that affect other acts. In your consultations, was there any concern on any of the issues with the other acts, or the consequential amendments, as it is so eloquently put?

Mr. Mitchell: No. The conversations – I understood that there would have to be other acts that would be affected by additions or deletions. I haven’t had anybody concerned – I’ll let Sam add to that.

Samantha Murphy Manager: We did check with every department responsible, and in almost all cases it’s purely definitions where it refers to types of municipalities that don’t exist anymore.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Sam.

In almost all cases. Is there an example of – there are quite a few of them, and I’ll be honest, I didn’t go through every single one of them. Is there anything that was discussed or any kind of discussion around – because they are affecting other acts – we could have questions about each one of them unless, like you say, they are just definitions. But is there anything in particular that people are concerned with?

Samantha Murphy Manager: The ones that are not straight definitions would be the *Real Property Tax Act* that we were discussing earlier that we had to make sure the provisions between the two acts matched. The *Pesticides Control Act* where we were making sure that something was carried over –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct).

Samantha Murphy Manager: In one or two places it was very old language about magistrate versus (Indistinct) – there were just some language things, but they were all very technical. They were not changing substantively how the acts would operate.

Mr. MacEwen: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

Again, minister, if you wouldn't mind – I know we passed the amendments to the current act, and this act will come into play, and I know we discussed it, but I did have a concern from one of the municipalities in my district, asked just about – if you wouldn't mind, just take a minute and clarify exactly how that will roll out. The old act will continue to be in place until this act is (Indistinct) could you just – and I know it's a bit repetitive. Could you do that again?

Mr. Mitchell: Absolutely. This act, as it gets second reading and third reading, will remain in the queue until we have the regulations completed, which will probably take in the vicinity of 12 months to get completed, done, put through Executive Council. When that happens this act will then be turned on, become effective, and the older act then will become default, I guess, for a lack of a better term.

Those amendments and provisions that we made in the old act at the start of this session will carry us through for probably the next 12 months, basically, before this comes into place.

Chair: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Chair.

You remember earlier when we were debating this act, I had asked about other jurisdictions or other provinces where the minister might not have that absolute power to suggest changes or to bring things, and you mentioned three provinces. Would you be able to actually bring back – and you said it was different. It wasn't straight, like black-and-white kind of thing. Could you give me those in a handout on those three provinces and what the differences are for those three provinces as far as minister –

Mr. Mitchell: We could craft that up specific for you and get it sent off.

Mr. MacEwen: Yeah, no rush. Maybe just in the next year or something like that.

Mr. Mitchell: Would you like that – I'm usually fairly quick (Indistinct) –

Mr. MacEwen: Minister, I have to say your responses are fairly quick and I appreciate that. Some of them take a year or two, but I know you're a lot quicker (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: That's something –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

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

Mr. Mitchell: We'll get that to you.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

I'm just looking at page 120 in Schedule A for Victoria Park, (Indistinct) detailed description. Maybe you could just give us a bit of an overview as to why that's included in here and what the changes are compared to (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct).

Samantha Murphy Manager: The schedule for Victoria Park?

Ms. Compton: Yes.

Samantha Murphy Manager: When Victoria Park was originally granted from the Crown to the city there were certain responsibilities placed on the city as to how the park would be managed over time. We just needed to make sure that was carried over through legislation that is in the *Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act* currently. This is protecting that.

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

Ms. Compton: Schedule A, is there anything different? It's just the same as the previous?

Samantha Murphy Manager: It's carried over from the *Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act*.

Mr. Mitchell: It would have been in the Charlottetown act.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Thank you, Chair.

Just as a general – I know the last three times we were on the floor we were doing technicalities and things like that, but before we finish up the act, just wondering if you could just give us a general overview of what is expected. In communities like Hazelbrook and Alexandra, who have been in touch with you, and they are incorporated areas, what's the timeframe on what they have to do? I have another constituency had a concern out in Grandview that's unincorporated. What are the expectations in areas like that?

Mr. Mitchell: I guess myself as minister, and obviously the Premier has indicated since we took power, that Judge Thompson's report, a very worthy report, had a lot of significant merit. We decided that we would look at communities allowing restructuring. There is no timetable. There is no timeline on that.

We are encouraging neighbouring communities to discuss options with other neighbouring communities, like Alexandra, like Grandview, to kind of look – primarily what we do when we begin these discussions is to have them think about areas of commonality. What services do you go somewhere else to use now? Where do you, perhaps, use the hospitals, the schools, the rink, the shopping centres? Just to establish what a good fit would be.

When they have those discussions and they're looking at things like population numbers or other specifics, we provide supports like that through Sam's shop here, and they do a super job of getting the material for these communities that have any interest in that.

Obviously, that's how things have been going. We have been having, I'll use the term, a lot of success in things moving forward. Currently there's probably five different groups that are – of various sizes, too. Some of them are fairly significant that are having terrific conversations about it. Do I expect them to all get done over night? Certainly not. Some are going to take a number of months to even get to a particular level where they're even comfortable to say: Yeah, let's keep going to the next level. It's a work in progress and it'll remain that.

I've indicated to every community that I spoke with that when you get to a particular point we can come and sit at a table. I've had some indicate that, just for now, just stay back, we're working on this on our own, and I'll give them the window to do that as well.

No timelines, no predetermined numbers, no predetermined areas. Just looking for things to work through naturally, and bring some long-term vision for a stronger PEI.

Chair: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Super. Just wondering about spurring the conversation. If you live in an unincorporated area, you have no municipality government type at all, who do contact? Do you contact the UCW, the CWL, the Women's Institute? Someone in an unincorporated area really has no role in that area except as a – but he or she is interested in this whole process. How does that whole thing get started?

Mr. Mitchell: I think the thing to do would be, in that case, if you're in an unincorporated area and you just have some thoughts about it, contact Sam's shop (Indistinct) that way.

If you're incorporated and you're looking at talking to an unincorporated area – I grew up in rural PEI in an unincorporated area, and even unincorporated areas, although they don't have mayors and chairs, they usually have a family that was kind of the overseer of the community activities or whatever, like that. That would be – I indicated to people, and I can think back when I was younger, those community leaders who I would be making a phone call to. I suggest that any incorporated areas identify those individuals, or families, that kind of are spear-headers of every event and thing that goes on in the community, begin the conversation there.

Some have gone in that direction and are gone to the next level as well.

Mr. McIsaac: If you do not hear from an unincorporated community, will you be contacting someone there? Will you be looking for a UCW or CWL or 4-H Club or

whatever it might be to get this started? Or are you not pushing it from your end, at all?

Mr. Mitchell: We're not really pushing it from our end, at all. Most of these are being spun out of conversation locally. I think that's where you're going to get the most successes. I, as minister, don't want to call Grandview and say, I suggest you talk to Belfast. I don't think that's the right thing to do.

I think, basically, if you really stop and think about it: Where do I go for my services? If you can list five services in a community that would be a good start to go talk to that community. I think that would be a very effective first step.

Mr. McIsaac: A lot of this is likely going to be incorporated areas contacting unincorporated areas around them.

Mr. Mitchell: Could be.

Mr. McIsaac: Okay.

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair. Minister, you might have answered the questions over there with the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, but I couldn't hear.

The same kind of story in my district. I've got Belfast, which is operated with a community council; Murray Harbour, which is very concentrated. If you go just outside the village, unincorporated, then Murray River is incorporated. Not a lot of communication between any of them on how this moves forward especially for an unincorporated area. I'm pretty sure you answered, but I couldn't really hear what you said.

Mr. Mitchell: Probably that answer was similar to that answer for your concern. If you have existing municipalities that want to begin discussion there are two ways that things can occur.

The seven communities down east that are working now, as I had mentioned before, have decided that the way they're going to work is to involve the unincorporateds right

away and get out and identify those in those in unincorporated areas that would like to be part of their group for discussion. That's effective.

There is the other way where existing municipalities can actually decide that if there are three – like Murray River, Murray Harbour, Belfast – that think we should join together, we can do services, shared services, there is benefit there, reasons to do that – that's an option too. Then go broader and have discussions with unincorporated areas. That's another equally effective way.

In the unincorporated areas that you mentioned, they probably might have concerns about – and I often hear it when I talk to people – about taxation is number one. Taxation should not be your number one concern. We have indicated taxes will be based on services provided. If you're living on main street anytown Prince Edward Island where you're getting sewer and water and streetlights and curbs –

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. Mitchell: That's Fitzroy Street, yes, I'm sorry about that –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: – you're paying a specific tax based on those services. If you're in another area that's out there with no services, your taxes will reflect that. You're not paying the same amount of tax. That's a misconception.

I call it a misconception, but it's not really a misconception because back in 1995 that's how some things occurred. Did we learn lessons from that? Absolutely. That's not the most effective way to go, with a hammer, and say: You're in, and your taxes are the same as main street as rural street. If there was anything that you learned, that was learned.

The method of allowing tax for service, you're going to pay that rate. If you're less, you're going to be less.

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

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

On that note, I'm looking at the village of Murray Harbour. You go half a kilometre outside the village –

Chair: Hon. members, we're getting a little loud and people are hearing from one side to the other. Could we just tame it down a little bit?

Leader of the Opposition: I appreciate that.

Ms. Compton: Less than half a kilometre outside the village and you're not incorporated, you're not part of the village. How is there any incentive there? Because they still have the services, other than they don't have the sewer or the water. What's the enticement to include them in an incorporated area?

Mr. Mitchell: As the hon. member beside you mentioned, there are areas you can apply for federal funds and provincial funds that you're not up to size to do to date. There are opportunities to really build your community. Hopefully, everybody sees value in that and sees reasons why you would do that.

Even if you join larger municipalities or existing municipalities together, there is benefit in that regard, too. There's other benefits, too. You can regionalize your communities to say that's where, as I mentioned before, farming will remain there. Subdivisions will remain there.

All those things that are (Indistinct) they're a benefit, but until you start discussing it – like, when my phone rings when somebody says it's a half a mile outside (Indistinct) I don't want to go in there. First question I ask is: Why? What is it that you're afraid of, or what concerns you to go in? As the conversation progresses along, often they say: You know what? I didn't really think of all those aspects. So their apprehension becomes much less, and then they become interested in listening to the conversations.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

I'm just curious. There's been a lot of discussion on this bill with regards to the smaller communities, and in particular the unincorporated communities, and merging them together to form small but larger municipalities and take the unincorporated out.

I guess my concern, and my constituents in Stratford-Kinlock: Is there an eventual plan to try and get some of the larger municipalities to merge as well? Like, for Charlottetown to take over – or for Stratford to take over Charlottetown, or –

Mr. Mitchell: There's no plan, hon. member, for something like that to occur. Our bigger municipalities are operating very effectively, but there's nothing to block that, if our larger municipalities want to have conversations and see reason and benefit and merit. I wouldn't be blocking that. Conversations would occur.

Mr. Aylward: Okay.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

I'm interested in 222(2), and it says that where fewer persons are nominated for a by-election the minister may appoint. I'm interested in what qualifications the minister would look at if, let's say, the community didn't have enough people for the nomination, and it gives you the power to go in and nominate people. What would you look at to do that?

Mr. Mitchell: They have to be eligible. They'd have to be a citizen of age living in the municipality, not necessarily in the ward, but that was a concern that was addressed previously. We were looking at (Indistinct) if they'd be living inside the ward, but that doesn't make a lot of sense in a municipality when it doesn't even apply to us provincially, so we've changed all those things. But there would be those minimum requirements of age, citizenship, and living in the (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: How would you do that, minister? If you looked at, say, Borden-Carleton didn't have enough

members to run the council, for the nominations they only had two people, so what would you look at, or what would give you the expertise to step into that community and say that John, Jake, and Joe are going to run for that position?

Samantha Murphy Manager: Again, it's a worst case scenario if the council's unable to operate because they do not have enough members to be able to hold a meeting, those sort of situations. I suspect the minister would be looking for guidance from the municipality.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, I'll give you my personal approach if it got to that worst case scenario. I would do as I said earlier. I would ask someone to help me identify community leaders. It might be the guy that runs the store. It might be the guy that runs the services. It might be the school bus driver. I would approach them and say: We're in a bit of a situation here, and it had been indicated that you were a strong community person with strong community values. Would you be interested? That's the way I would personally do it.

Leader of the Opposition: Which, in all fairness –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: – Chair, and minister, it might be – how would you say it? – quite congratulatory to an individual to have the minister step in and ask me as a storeowner to do that –

Mr. Mitchell: Perhaps.

Leader of the Opposition: – so I can understand that.

Chair, on 223(1), appointment of officers in regards to bylaw, would there be any thought of saying three communities amalgamate and they really can't afford a bylaw officer fulltime, that maybe they could enter into a contract with the provincial government, we'll say a conservation officer, maybe, that could go into a community and enforce bylaws, or it could be the SPCA or something like that?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, you know what? Currently, and I'll use the exact example

that you're putting forward, currently our officers are pretty busy.

Leader of the Opposition: Right.

Mr. Mitchell: Obviously, there are bylaws in place now in three of the larger – and to be four of the larger. I've indicated to them, there's four of you there now, you should have your own service there because we're pretty full on our agendas. I mean, the opportunity would be, though, that they come together and hire their own bylaw officer –

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: – to take care of whatever their needs are.

There's ample work (Indistinct) four or more come together to do that on their own. They don't really need government to do that for them.

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: I guess to expand on that, Chair, you take the city of Charlottetown, in some cases I guess my understanding is they contract the department of transportation to snowplow some streets, and of course Charlottetown pays the minister for that service.

Could there maybe be the avenue open too, down the road, to a municipality to say: Yeah, okay, I'll contact to the province to do our bylaws, bylaw stuff, and then the province could have an officer that maybe –

Mr. Mitchell: The only difference about the case that you put forward, hon. member, is that that's like a three-month window.

Leader of the Opposition: Oh, yeah.

Mr. Mitchell: I'm looking at 365 days a year to do what you're suggesting for the bylaws. If I've got to hire more staff, they might as well hire their own staff, and then it becomes more effective including it (Indistinct).

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition, final question.

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, let's change gears for a second. Geez, you didn't cut off Brad or the member over there.

Take Borden and Kinkora and Bedeque, and they join together, and you have the unincorporated area in the centre, which would be the Middleton Albany area, right? If I understand it right, currently right now the provincial government receives gas tax money for those unincorporated areas. Am I right in saying that?

Samantha Murphy Manager: There's some funding that's related to municipal-type services, and it's largely roads and bridges that are in the unincorporated areas. It's not general funds available to the province.

Leader of the Opposition: Okay. With that, Chair, if Borden, Kinkora, and Bedeque join, that area in the centre, would that municipality then receive the funding that the provincial government gets in relation to that unincorporated area which is now brought into that incorporated area?

Mr. Mitchell: If the incorporated area joins into the – like, I'll say the three –

Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, so you've got Bedeque, Kinkora, and Borden join. So you've got that area in the centre of Middleton Albany which would be taken into that.

Mr. Mitchell: I think, hon. member, it's not that that area in the middle that's unincorporated gets the funds, but when they become part of the population of their municipality, then their person gives that municipality access to more funds. The population of the municipality is how it's based on them growing. Is that fair to say?

Samantha Murphy Manager: And greater categories of services (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, greater categories and services.

Leader of the Opposition: So with –

Chair: I'll give the hon. member follow up here and then – because I think he's going to add to this question, then we'll go get a further explanation.

Mr. Mitchell: I probably can clarify what I think you're going (Indistinct) – there is just one certain pot of money, so when you access that –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) criteria is set by the federal government.

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

Ms. Biggar: Sorry. I'm just going to clarify that gas tax comes from the federal government and it just comes in based on a certain criteria. Whatever that municipality gets, it's set on that. Then, it just goes back out.

Leader of the Opposition: So with that –

Chair: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition: – if that criteria is met and that new funding comes down into that municipality, would there be any threat that the province would download services in relation to that new area which was unincorporated before?

Mr. Mitchell: No, that would not be the intention, nope, and I've indicated that. I'll use the example of if a government plow was plowing the road today it would be the same way tomorrow because we don't expect to download that onto municipalities.

However, the ones that are taking care of the services that they do, they seem to be wanting to maintain that, and they have employees and things and people that they want to deal with, so some have indicated that they would continue that.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, minister.

Carry the bill.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you very much, Chair.

Chair, I guess my question, again, goes back to the larger municipalities. Currently in Stratford we're experiencing a situation where we have unprecedented growth and we have an issue with our treatment plant.

I know the Premier has been involved in that discussion or correspondence back and forth with council and directly to the mayor of Stratford.

I'm just wondering if I can get an update on where we're at with that situation. I know it's a burning issue in Stratford, and we're looking to get that resolved as soon as we can. Particularly with the deadline for accessing federal funds through the program that's currently available, but the window is closing.

Mr. Mitchell: Certainly, and I'll pass that off to the Premier –

Ms. Biggar: I can take that.

Mr. Mitchell: – or the minister of infrastructure.

Mr. Aylward: It'd be nice to hear from the Premier.

Ms. Biggar: I'll take it, then (Indistinct) the Premier wants to add something.

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

Ms. Biggar: We are having ongoing conversations with the Stratford council in regard to the window of opportunity to achieve funding from the provincial government and looking at the alternative option of running the sewer pipe across the bridge.

Our objective is to have as little effluent into the Hillsborough River as possible. Right now there's three. We want to bring that down, environmentally, so that we can protect the Hillsborough River. That's an option that we are preferring to go with.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I can expand on that. The discussions are active with the mayor and council of Stratford together with the city of Charlottetown and the province.

In terms of the timelines, the hope as expressed in the most recent which was made public is that this would be resolved by the end of the year, or that there would be an initiative that would be the basis for the

important design and planning work that needs to be done by the end of the year.

I haven't given up hope on that. Or I should say we, all the parties involved, have not given up hope that that will be the case.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks, Chair.

I'm on record as stating that I am a proponent for a regional utility. I think it makes sense that we don't have two separate treatment plants less than 2.5 kilometres away from each other, and another spillage into the waterway.

But the major concern in Stratford, the major sticking point, particularly with the residents, is the fear that if there is not control and there's not shared responsibility for a regional utility, that Stratford would, all of a sudden, be burdened with excessively high costs for their share, essentially their taxes to look after the utility, on their monthly bill.

We have high property taxes as it is right now and the good people of Stratford want to do the right thing, but they don't want to pay an excessive amount to do it.

I'm just looking, I guess, for an assurance for my constituents that this can be done, but this can be done in a financially, fiscally responsible manner where the residents of Stratford aren't faced with a heavy financial burden.

Premier MacLauchlan: If I may, Mr. Chair.

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: That's been the objective in these discussions including the involvement of the city of Charlottetown which, in fact, made a commitment regarding dropping what would be the normal overhead charge.

It actually comprises three things – overhead sump cost or amortization, you might say, and then simple administrative charges from what would normally be 25% to 15% – and otherwise Stratford would pay the same per

ton charge as the city of Charlottetown or other users. Then, in a further endeavour to offer certainty the province has committed to be an arbitrator in the event of a future difference between the two parties.

It's in effect a commercial arrangement where all parties are endeavouring to have certainty, certainly, to respect the interest of ratepayers and taxpayers.

Chair: The hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock.

Mr. Aylward: Thanks, Chair.

Just one last question: Again, I'm just looking for an assurance, a guarantee, that moving forward the residents of Stratford won't be faced with an excessive increase, or a dramatic increase, for that matter, on their sewage bill that they're paying right now as compared to Charlottetown.

Are you looking at working with all parties to establish a regional utility or, as you said, would it be just an arbitrator that would get involved in the event that there is a disagreement on the fees that are charged?

Chair: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: We are not looking at establishing a regional utility in this precise time frame. This would be for Stratford to have the opportunity to deal with the existing plant and operation of the city of Charlottetown.

When you look at what you might call the degree of uncertainty, which is really the question that's being asked by the hon. member, the range of risk is considerably more predictable in dealing with Charlottetown than it is to start up and create a whole new plant. That, together with the environmental concerns which you have identified and shared, hon. member is where the three parties are at this time. I can, while I'm – the province is only one of the three parties. I believe there is a feeling of optimism that that parties will work together for a common solution.

Mr. Aylward: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall Schedule A carry? Carried.

Shall Schedule B carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: I move the title.

Chair: *Municipal Government Act.*

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: I move the enacting clause.

Chair: Whereas Prince Edward Island's municipalities are established by the Province of Prince Edward Island and governed by democratically elected officials;

And whereas this Act provides the legislative framework that is necessary for municipal governments in the Province of Prince Edward Island to create and sustain safe, healthy, orderly and viable communities;

And whereas the Government of Prince Edward Island and Prince Edward Island's municipalities recognize

(a) that public engagement is fundamental to good government;

(b) that Prince Edward Island's municipalities are responsible and accountable local governments that play an important role in the province's economic, environmental and social prosperity today and for the future;

(c) that the citizens of Prince Edward Island are best served when the Government of Prince Edward Island and Prince Edward Island's municipalities work co-operatively and collaboratively to advance the interests of Prince Edward Islanders generally;

(d) the importance of the Government of Prince Edward Island and Prince Edward Island's municipalities respecting each other's authority; and

(e) the importance of the Government of Prince Edward Island and Prince Edward Island's municipalities consulting on matters of mutual interest;

And whereas the Government of Prince Edward Island, by this Act, recognizes that municipalities require

- (a) the power and authority to address existing and future municipal needs;
- (b) flexibility in order to address differing needs in municipalities;
- (c) the authority to determine the levels of municipal expenditures and taxation that are necessary to support municipal needs; and
- (d) the authority to provide effective management and delivery of services in a manner that is responsive to municipal needs;

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

Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Mitchell: Before I use the last clause, I would like to thank all members of this Legislature for their cooperation and great questions on this very significant act that has been sought after for many years for those that fall under the umbrella of it.

Thank you very much, hon. members.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: 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 *Municipal Government Act*, 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): The hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Mr. Myers: Yes, a standing vote (Indistinct).

Speaker: A standing vote has been requested on this, hon. members.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you can ring the bells.

[The bells were rung]

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

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

Speaker: It's a standing vote that's been requested.

All those voting against, please rise.

Clerk: The hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Member from Stratford-Kinlock, the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, the hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River, and the hon. Member from Georgetown-St. Peters.

Speaker: All those voting in favour 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 Family and Human Services, the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale, 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. Leader of the Third Party, the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, and the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Brighton.

Speaker: Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This concludes the business –

Speaker: No. Sorry.

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Gallant: Okay.

Speaker: You were signalling to me.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the orders No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 of the day be now read.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

The following bills were ordered for third reading:

Order No. 3, *An Act to Amend the Municipalities Act* (Bill No. 24);

Order No. 4, *An Act to Amend the Planning Act* (Bill No. 25);

Order No. 5, *An Act to Amend the Unsightly Property Act* (Bill No. 35);

Order No. 6, *Procurement of Goods Act* (Bill No. 36);

Order No. 7, *An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Electric Smoking Devices Sales and Access Act* (Bill No. 37);

Order No. 8, *An Act to Amend the Public Health Act* (Bill No. 38);

Order No. 9, *An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act* (Bill No. 39);

Order No. 10, *An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (P.E.I.) Ltd.* (Bill No. 40);

Order No. 11, *An Act to Amend the Premium Tax Act* (Bill No. 42);

Order No. 12, *An Act to Amend the Adult Protection Act* (Bill No. 41);

Order No. 13, *An Act to Amend the Teachers' Superannuation Act* (Bill No. 44);

Order No. 14, *An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act* (Bill No. 45);

Order No. 15, *An Act to Amend the Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act* (Bill No. 46);

Order No. 16, *An Act to Amend the Off-Highway Vehicle Act* (Bill No. 52);

Order No. 17, *An Act to Amend the Social Work Act* (Bill No. 47);

Order No. 18, *An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act* (Bill No. 53);

Order No. 19, *Private Training Schools Act* (Bill No. 48);

Order No. 20, *Hannah's Bill (An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act)* (Bill No. 49);

Order No. 21, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act* (Bill No. 50);

Order No. 22, *An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2)* (Bill No. 51);

Order No. 23, *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2017* (Bill No. 54);

Order No. 24, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2)* (Bill No. 56);

Order No. 25, *Municipal Government Act* (Bill No. 58);

Order No. 26, *An Act to Amend the Health Services Payment Act (No. 3)* (Bill No. 59);

Order No. 27, *An Act to Repeal the Store Hours Act* (Bill No. 55); and

Order No. 28, *Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2016* (Bill No. 60).

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the said bill be now read a third time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Do I have unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Speaker: Thank you.

The following bills were read a third time:

An Act to Amend the Municipalities Act (Bill No. 24);

An Act to Amend the Planning Act (Bill No. 25);

An Act to Amend the Unsightly Property Act (Bill No. 35);

Procurement of Goods Act (Bill No. 36);

An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Electric Smoking Devices Sales and Access Act (Bill No. 37);

An Act to Amend the Public Health Act (Bill No. 38);

An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act (Bill No. 39);

An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (P.E.I.) Ltd. (Bill No. 40);

An Act to Amend the Premium Tax Act (Bill No. 42);

An Act to Amend the Adult Protection Act (Bill No. 41);

An Act to Amend the Teachers' Superannuation Act (Bill No. 44);

An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act (Bill No. 45);

An Act to Amend the Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act (Bill No. 46);

An Act to Amend the Off-Highway Vehicle Act (Bill No. 52);

An Act to Amend the Social Work Act (Bill No. 47);

An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act (Bill No. 53);

Private Training Schools Act (Bill No. 48);

Hannah's Bill (An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act) (Bill No. 49);

An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (Bill No. 50);

An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2) (Bill No. 51);

Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2017 (Bill No. 54);

An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2) (Bill No. 56);

Municipal Government Act (Bill No. 58);

An Act to Amend the Health Services Payment Act (No. 3) (Bill No. 59);

An Act to Repeal the Store Hours Act (Bill No. 55); and

Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2016 (Bill No. 60).

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the said bills do now pass with unanimous consent as required.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

These bills are introduced by leave of the House, read a first time, read a second time, committed to a Committee of the Whole House, reported agreed to with or without amendment as the case may be, read a third time and it is now moved that the bills do pass.

All those in favour, say "yea."

Some Hon. Members: Yea!

Speaker: Contrary minded, "nay."

Carried.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I guess now's the time for me to do this. I was a little excited the first time around.

Madam Speaker, this concludes the business that government wishes to conduct this session.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, I am advised that His Honour, the Honourable Lieutenant Governor, has arrived at the Coles Building to consider the grant of Royal Assent to the additional bills passed to date during this, the 2nd Session of the 65th General Assembly. I now propose to leave the Chair in anticipation of His Honour's arrival.

[Recess]

Clerk: Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain additional bills during this, the 2nd Session of the 65th General Assembly, and now begs Your Honour's consideration of the grant of Royal Assent for the following bills:

An Act to Amend the Municipalities Act (Bill No. 24);

An Act to Amend the Planning Act (Bill No. 25);

An Act to Amend the Unsightly Property Act (Bill No. 35);

Procurement of Goods Act (Bill No. 36);

An Act to Amend the Tobacco and Electronic Smoking Devices Sales and Access Act (Bill No. 37);

An Act to Amend the Public Health Act (Bill No. 38);

An Act to Amend the Registered Nurses Act (Bill No. 39);

An Act Respecting the Winding Up of Judgment Recovery (P.E.I.) Ltd. (Bill No. 40);

An Act to Amend the Adult Protection Act (Bill No. 41);

An Act to Amend the Premium Tax Act (Bill No. 42);

An Act to Amend the Teachers' Superannuation Act (Bill No. 44);

An Act to Amend the Civil Service Superannuation Act (Bill No. 45);

An Act to Amend the Community Development Equity Tax Credit Act (Bill No. 46);

An Act to Amend the Social Work Act (Bill No. 47);

Private Training Schools Act (Bill No. 48);

Hannah's Bill (An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act) (Bill No. 49);

An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (Bill No. 50);

An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act (No. 2) (Bill No. 51);

An Act to Amend the Off-Highway Vehicle Act (Bill No. 52);

An Act to Amend the Innovation PEI Act (Bill No. 53);

An Act to Repeal the Store Hours Act (Bill No. 55);

An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act (No. 2) (Bill No. 56);

Municipal Government Act (Bill No. 58);

An Act to Amend the Health Services Payment Act (No. 3) (Bill No. 59); and

Supplementary Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2016 (Bill No. 60).

His Honour Lieutenant Governor H. Frank Lewis: In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

Speaker: May it please Your Honour, we, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island in session assembled, approach Your Honour at the close of our labours with sentiments of unfeigned devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty's person and

government. We do humbly beg for Your Honour's acceptance of a bill to be intituled *Appropriation Act (Capital Expenditures) 2017*, thus placing at the disposal of the Crown, the means by which government can be made efficient for the service and welfare of the province.

Clerk: His Honour, the hon. Lieutenant Governor, doth thank Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, accepts their benevolence, and assents to this Bill in Her Majesty's name.

His Honour Lieutenant Governor H. Frank Lewis: I wish to commend all hon. members for the conscientious manner in which you have conducted your deliberations to this point of the 2nd Session of the 65th General Assembly of Prince Edward Island. At this time, I pray that until the Legislative Assembly again meets, each of you enjoy good health and prosperity and that peace and freedom for all people shall be more nearly achieved.

I was going to say have good golf, but there'd be no golf I guess now.

Ms. Biggar: Merry Christmas!

Some Hon. Members: Merry Christmas!

Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member from Evangeline-Miscouche.

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that this House adjourn and stand adjourned until the call of the Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. members, before I put the question, I would just like to say, on behalf of the Speaker, we would like to say thank you to the Clerks and all of the staff at the Legislative Assembly, including the Pages, the police, the media, the security teams, everybody who has looked after us.

To you, members, I'd also like to say thank you for welcoming me so kindly back to the Chair. You know how much I like this role, and I was thrilled to sit in the Chair this week.

To everybody, Merry Christmas, safe travels tonight, and we will see you the next time that we sit.

Shall it carry? Carried.

The Legislature adjourned until the call of the Speaker