

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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Third Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly

Tuesday, 14 November 2017

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Agriculture and Fisheries	J. Alan McIsaac
Communities, Land and Environment	Robert J. Mitchell
Economic Development and Tourism	J. Heath MacDonald
Education, Early Learning and Culture	Jordan Brown
Family and Human Services	Tina Mundy
Finance	Allen F. Roach
Health and Wellness	Robert Henderson
Premier (President of the Executive Council; Minister of Justice and Public Safety, and Attorney General; Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs; Minister Responsible for Acadian and Francophone Affairs)	H. Wade MacLauchlan
Rural and Regional Development	Pat Murphy
Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy and Minister Responsible for Status of Women	Paula J. Biggar
Workforce and Advanced Learning.....	Sonny Gallant
Government House Leader	Richard Brown
Whip.....	Chris Palmer

OPPOSITION

Leader of the Opposition	James Aylward
Opposition House Leader	Matthew MacKay
Whip.....	Sidney MacEwen
Leader of the Third Party	Dr. Peter Bevan-Baker

OCCUPANTS OF THE CHAIR

Speaker.....	Francis (Buck) Watts
Deputy Speaker	Kathleen Casey

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District #2 Georgetown-St. Peters	Myers, Steven (PC)
District #3 Montague-Kilmuir	Roach, Allen (L)
District #4 Belfast-Murray River	Compton, Darlene (PC)
District #5 Vernon River-Stratford	McIsaac, Alan (L)
District #6 Stratford-Kinlock	Aylward, James (PC)
District #7 Morell-Mermaid.....	MacEwen, Sidney (PC)
District #8 Tracadie-Hillsborough Park.....	Watts, Buck (L)
District #9 York-Oyster Bed.....	MacLauchlan, Premier Wade (L)
District #10 Charlottetown-Sherwood	Mitchell, Robert (L)
District #11 Charlottetown-Parkdale	(Vacant)
District #12 Charlottetown-Victoria Park.....	Brown, Richard (L)
District #13 Charlottetown-Brighton	Brown, Jordan (L)
District #14 Charlottetown-Lewis Point	Casey, Kathleen (L)
District #15 West Royalty-Springvale	Dumville, Bush (L)
District #16 Cornwall-Meadowbank.....	MacDonald, Heath (L)
District #17 Kellys Cross-Cumberland.....	Bevan-Baker, Peter (G)
District #18 Rustico-Emerald	Trivers, Brad (PC)
District #19 Borden-Kinkora	Fox, Jamie (PC)
District #20 Kensington-Malpeque.....	MacKay, Matthew (PC)
District #21 Summerside-Wilmot.....	Chris Palmer (L)
District #22 Summerside-St. Eleanors.....	Mundy, Tina (L)
District #23 Tyne Valley-Linkletter.....	Biggar, Paula (L)
District #24 Evangeline-Miscouche.....	Gallant, Sonny (L)
District #25 O'Leary-Inverness	Henderson, Robert (L)
District #26 Alberton-Roseville.....	Murphy, Pat (L)
District #27 Tignish-Palmer Road	Perry, Hal (L)

G Green Party; L Liberal Party; PC Progressive Conservative Party

Members and Districts

Aylward, James (PC)	Stratford-Kinlock
Bevan-Baker, Peter (G).....	Kellys Cross-Cumberland
Biggar, Paula (L).....	Tyne Valley-Linkletter
Brown, Jordan (L).....	Charlottetown-Brighton
Brown, Richard (L).....	Charlottetown-Victoria Park
Casey, Kathleen (L)	Charlottetown-Lewis Point
Compton, Darlene (PC)	Belfast-Murray River
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Fox, Jamie (PC)	Borden-Kinkora
Gallant, Sonny (L)	Evangeline-Miscouche
Henderson, Robert (L)	O’Leary-Inverness
LaVie, Colin (PC)	Souris-Elmira
MacDonald, Heath (L)	Cornwall-Meadowbank
MacEwen, Sidney (PC).....	Morell-Mermaid
MacKay, Matthew (PC).....	Kensington-Malpeque
MacLauchlan, Premier Wade (L)	York-Oyster Bed
McIsaac, Alan (L)	Vernon River-Stratford
Mitchell, Robert (L).....	Charlottetown-Sherwood
Mundy, Tina (L).....	Summerside-St. Eleanors
Murphy, Pat (L)	Alberton-Roseville
Myers, Steven (PC).....	Georgetown-St. Peters
Palmer, Chris (L)	Summerside-Wilmot
Perry, Hal (L)	Tignish-Palmer Road
Roach, Allen (L)	Montague-Kilmuir
Trivers, Brad (PC).....	Rustico-Emerald
Watts, Buck (L).....	Tracadie-Hillsborough Park
(Vacant).....	Charlottetown-Parkdale

G Green Party; L Liberal Party; PC Progressive Conservative Party

The Legislature met at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: You may be seated.

Hon. Premier, hon. Leader of the Opposition, hon. Leader of the Third Party, hon. Chief Justice Jenkins, hon. Chief Justice Tracey Clements, congratulations on your recent appointment, and hon. Chief Justice Nancy Orr, hon. Frank Lewis and Dorothy.

It's nice to see all three branches of government represented here today. It doesn't happen very often, that all three branches are represented here today.

Welcome to the official opening of the 3rd Session of the 65th General Assembly. I look forward to working with all hon. members and media for a productive and collegial session of the Legislature.

I'd also like to particularly thank the staff of the Legislative Assembly for all the background work that goes into preparing this place for a new session. Services such as; security, Hansard, research, the library, corporate services, audio and broadcast services, communications, administration, committee support, tech support, and procedural services. The list is extensive and all must work together.

I have seen firsthand just how much goes into readying this place for business and I want to acknowledge and commend all Assembly staff for the significant contribution they make to the functioning of PEI's parliament.

I wish to advise those in attendance that pursuant to section 24 (b) of the *Legislative Assembly Act* and dated October 19th, 2017, I received written notification from Doug Currie, Member of the Legislative Assembly for District 11, Charlottetown-Parkdale, of his resignation as a Member of the Legislative Assembly effective on that date.

As required, I notified the Lieutenant Governor of Mr. Currie's resignation, and request that the Clerk ensure that this information is included in the Journal of the Legislative Assembly.

I also wish to advise that I have received a communication from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, and I will now ask the Clerk to read that letter. For those who are able, would you please stand while the letter is being read.

Clerk: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts, MLA Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Province House, Charlottetown Prince Edward Island.

Dear Mr. Speaker;

I am directed by Her Honour, the Hon. Antoinette Perry, Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island, to inform you that on Tuesday, the 14th day of November, 2017, at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, she will proceed to the Legislative Assembly to open the 3rd Session of the 65th General Assembly.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient servant
Cindy Cheverie, Private Secretary.

Speaker: Thank you.

Please be seated.

Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, that the following students be appointed as Pages for this, the 3rd Session of the 65th General Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island:

Bailey Clark, Kensington Intermediate-Senior High School; Robin Dann, Montague Regional High School; Esther Puiras, Bluefield High School; Julia Ezeard, Grace Christian School; Jacob MacDonald, Morell Regional High School; Kristi Stewart, Colonel Gray Senior High School; Naomi Milner, Charlottetown Rural High School; Rilind Musliu, Three Oaks Senior High School; Matteo LeClair, Ecole François-Buote; Olivia Batten, Westisle Composite High School and Logan Rose, Souris Regional High School.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Congratulations, Pages. You have done well. It has to be like a dream come true for, I

would say, most of you, to have achieved this – such an accomplishment, and to be inside of the rails. Not too many people have the opportunity and the chance that you do; the accomplishment that you've made.

You are not going to be working for the Legislative Assembly; you are going to be working with the Legislative Assembly. We are all going to work together.

You will find that after a few days that the main objective of all MLAs is to improve, somewhat, on what we have already. That's what every MLA is here to do, just to improve on what's here already. You will help us to do that.

Once again, congratulations. Don't be a bit nervous. Ask questions. Listen. It's a great honour that you have bestowed upon yourselves. The main thing is, when we're in this process, have fun, because you will find that we are going to have fun. You can't succeed in anything unless you have a little bit of fun while you're doing it.

Congratulations. Good work.

Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: As a consequence of the retirement of Warrant Officer, J.A. MacDonald, as Sergeant-at-Arms of this House, effective September 29th, 2017, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition that Mr. Brian Weldon of Charlottetown be appointed as Sergeant-at-Arms of the Legislative Assembly effective immediately.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, as a consequence of Mr. Weldon's appointment as Sergeant-at-Arms of this House, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that Ms. Amy Unwin, of Cherry Valley, be appointed as Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms of the Legislative Assembly effective immediately.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I want to offer my congratulations to Brian and Amy. I'm sure that you will perform

your new duties in a very professional and conscientious manner. You come here with lots of experience and expertise in your positions. I'm sure you will be a tremendous asset to the House, so welcome aboard.

Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: As a consequence of Ms. Marian Johnston, Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees, assuming responsibilities as Chief Electoral Officer (Acting) for Prince Edward Island and her announced retirement effective December 31st, 2017 from the service from the House, I move, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that Ms. Emily Doiron of Charlottetown be appointed as Clerk Assistant (Journals, Committees and House Operations) and that Mr. Ryan Reddin of Millvale be appointed Clerk Assistant (Research and Committees).

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

I also want to congratulate Emily and Ryan. You also have some experience and you have shown that you have some expertise in doing this job. You have been doing a little bit of training over the couple of years. I certainly want to welcome you aboard and I look forward to working closely with both of you.

I also extend best wishes to former assistant clerk Marian Johnston, who is not with us today. For the first time since 2001, Marian is not with us. As we have heard, Marian is presently serving as CEO, Chief Electoral Officer (Acting) but will soon be retiring.

In reference to the communication read earlier by the Clerk, I wish to indicate that I will now leave the Chair in anticipation of Her Honour's arrival to read the Speech From the Throne.

Before leaving the Chair, hon. members and guests, after Her Honour's arrival in the Chamber, I want you to remain standing for the singing of *O Canada* that will be lead by the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

That will be followed by a prayer to the House by Mrs. Alma MacDougall. That prayer is on behalf of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island.

So now, I will leave the House.

[*O Canada* was sung]

Alma MacDougall: Good afternoon, Your Honour Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature Assembly, leaders, councillors.

Nina delusion, Wabec Kitpu Epit, I am a member of Abegweit First Nation, I am of the Salmon Clan. My spirit protectors are the Eagle, the Bear, and the Cougar. Today, I am humbled and honoured to say the opening prayer for the opening of the Legislature.

Creator, thank you for this day and for all the things you have made for us to share.

Creator, I ask that you remind us all to walk in honour with humility, seeking the good for all people who inhabit our lands. Today, I ask that you provide these men and women with understanding and respect for each other, the people and the land in which we live.

Creator, I humbly ask that you allow them to speak to each other with honour and humility so they may govern wisely and see all things with clarity. Please give them the courage to protect our people, our pristine waters, lands and the environments, so that all of our descendants may enjoy the beauty we have today.

Msit No'kmaq (All my relations)

Her Honour Lieutenant Governor Antoinette Perry: Thank you.

Please be seated.

Introduction

Monsieur le président, membres de l'Assemblée législative, invités et Insulaires, bienvenue à la troisième session de la 65^e assemblée générale de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard.

Mister Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, invited guests and all Prince Edward Islanders, welcome to the Third Session of the 65th General Assembly of Prince Edward Island.

As Her representative, I bring greetings on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen and extend my best wishes to all members of this Assembly in the work that is ahead of you.

En tant que représentante de sa Majesté la Reine, je vous transmets ses salutations et je souhaite à tous les membres de cette Assemblée bon succès dans le travail qui les attend.

I would like to thank all members of this Assembly, and indeed all Islanders, for the warm welcome that has greeted me since being installed as Lieutenant-Governor three weeks ago in my hometown of Tignish. I am honoured in this role to work on behalf of all Islanders. To serve in this way is a privilege, and I look forward to continuing to learn, connect and share with all Islanders in the coming months and years.

All members of this Assembly know very well the privilege of service. In every case, you have pledged to serve the best interests of the people of Prince Edward Island, in your districts and throughout the province. While some of our perspectives may be different, our objective should be the same: to achieve the best for the people, families and communities of Prince Edward Island. I encourage you to work together for the best outcomes for our province.

We all know that Prince Edward Island is a special place. Every year, we welcome hundreds of thousands of people from all parts of the world as visitors to our province. We are happy to show off our mighty Island, share our favourite places and extend our well-known hospitality. We have reason to be proud of this province, our people and our communities. We can see the progress being made in all parts of Prince Edward Island to build strong communities, welcoming and supportive neighbourhoods, vibrant businesses and creative culture.

Alors que nous faisons le point sur notre prospérité actuelle et les perspectives d'avenir, nous devons souligner le leadership déterminé et lucide de ceux qui nous ont précédés.

As we take stock of our current prosperity and promise, we acknowledge the

determined and sensitive leadership of those who have come before us.

Prince Edward Island's First Nations, the Mi'kmaq, have been here for millennia. They have been the stewards of our land and resources, and continue to encourage us to be responsible in the use of our air, waters and land, and responsive leaders to the needs and hopes of our people.

Those who arrived as early settlers to this Province did so with the expectation of embracing a future for themselves and their families. They built community and enterprise, developed responsible government, began trading relationships with partners across continents, and grew schools, hospitals and churches.

J'espère que vous me permettrez de saluer en particulier mes propres ancêtres Acadiens qui ont travaillé avec tant de diligence pour enrichir la culture et la communauté depuis des générations.

I hope you will allow me to acknowledge in particular my own Acadian forbearers who worked so diligently to build culture and community across the generations.

Through the 20th century, Prince Edward Island grew in population, economy and diversity. Education and work opportunities were provided in increasing numbers, and government enhanced public services and public infrastructure. In this century, we have continued to welcome new Islanders from across Canada and around the globe. We have shown the same welcome to new residents as we do to visitors, and our Island community is being enriched by new perspectives and diverse cultures.

Our province has seen progress by combining new approaches with our best traditions. We learn from each other. We recognize and celebrate our achievements. We tackle our challenges together. And when we succeed, we share and celebrate that success with our neighbours and friends.

Progress on our Agenda

Getting things done requires energy, commitment and collaboration.

Depuis 2015, en travaillant ensemble au sein de cette Assemblée et avec les Insulaires, les membres de notre gouvernement ont réalisé de grands progrès en tirant parti des atouts de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et en cherchant toujours à faire mieux pour la population.

Since 2015, by working together with Islanders and in this Assembly, My Government has achieved much in building on the strengths of Prince Edward Island and striving to do better for our residents. Our focus has been on the people and prosperity of our province, while modernizing government to support this work. In two and a half years, we have made real progress on our agenda.

- Our economy is stronger than it ever has been, and growing faster than the region and the country. Islanders are better off and our businesses and communities are growing and diversifying into new areas of activity.

- More Islanders are working, with more full-time jobs available, including more than 2,500 new full-time jobs in the last year.

- Total labour income in the province is experiencing the second fastest growth in the country.

- Our population is growing, reaching 152,000 in 2017, the fastest growth in Canada. For the first time since 1968, our median age has declined. We are well on track to meet the goal of a population of 160,000 Islanders by 2022.

- My Government has balanced its books, with the first balanced budget in a decade, allowing for more investments in health, education, children and families in communities throughout PEI.

- The Generic Drug Program has provided 18,000 Islanders with greater access to needed medication at a reasonable cost to them.

- We have provided direct tax relief to 85,000 Islanders and 3,000 fewer Islanders are paying any provincial income tax than in 2015.

- Together with our Federal partner, we have made historic investments in infrastructure, including the PEI-New

Brunswick Submarine Cable Project, the single largest infrastructure project since the Confederation Bridge.

- We have taken ambitious steps toward greater government transparency and accountability, including the establishment of the position of Ethics and Integrity Commissioner, the development of whistleblower policy and draft legislation, extended conflict of interest requirements, and more public disclosures.

- Since 2015, this Assembly has enacted 113 bills across all aspects of life and governance.

Prince Edward Island is on a solid path of fiscal strength and enhanced economic prosperity, allowing for smart investments in important services for our residents. The reinvigoration of the economic landscape, coupled with My Government's understanding of its core responsibilities, is offering our province new scope to succeed on the regional, national and international stages.

A Growing and Engaged Population

The story of our population is a positive one. We have grown and diversified. Still, there is more to do. The development of our Province's population is a matter of continuous evolution and initiative. This is a primary commitment of My Government. We are creating an environment of opportunity and enterprise; resulting in reduced out-migration and the attraction of new Islanders. We embrace the talents and contributions of seniors. And we must develop more opportunities and capacity for our workforce. The goal must always be to ensure that our people have the best possible opportunities to live, work, and thrive in Prince Edward Island.

Il ne faut jamais perdre de vue notre objectif qui consiste à offrir aux Insulaires les meilleures possibilités de vivre, de travailler et de s'épanouir à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard.

Earlier this year, My Government put in place a comprehensive plan to strengthen the population and workforce in Prince Edward Island through repatriation, recruitment and retention. The plan confirms our commitment to building a resilient, diverse,

and sustainable population. And it reflects our collective responsibility to grow the local economy and expand the range of opportunities for all Islanders.

Over the last six months, we have worked closely with our federal and municipal partners, local business owners, and community organizations to deliver on a number of key action items in our plan.

My Government recently announced new intermediaries for the provincial immigration program through an open and transparent process. These intermediaries, who compete around the world for new immigrants to our province, have been tasked with attracting more residents who want to live, work, and do business in all parts of Prince Edward Island.

We are collaborating with municipalities to develop "welcome to the community" initiatives to further strengthen our culture of inclusiveness. The objective is to help newcomers feel at home in Prince Edward Island. In addition, we have committed to working with community partners to create a more regional presence when it comes to the delivery of settlement services throughout our province.

In the coming year, My Government will take further steps to maximize retention rates for new immigrants. We will escalate our efforts to encourage more young Islanders to pursue opportunities here and to return home. By working with industry, we have found collaborative employment opportunities across strategic sectors, including expansion of the "Team Seafood" concept to other sectors, such as construction and transportation.

We will continue to strengthen efforts to attract and retain post-secondary graduates — including international students — by developing more opportunities locally. Last year, for example, we created the International Student Employer Liaison Office to help support the transition of international students into the local labour market when their studies are completed. We must build on this momentum.

And we will continue to expand the WorkPEI website to match job-seekers with employers looking for new employees. The

website will include a comprehensive and evergreen database of expatriate workers and entrepreneurs. This new database will be used to recruit and entice Islanders to return home.

My Government has set ambitious targets for near and long-term population growth. These targets send a clear signal to our neighbours and partners that we are committed to the future. And success, as is so often the case, will depend upon our collective commitment to developing the most valuable resource in Prince Edward Island: our people.

An Increasingly Diversified Economy

Population growth and economic growth go hand in hand. It is the hard work and ingenuity of people in communities across Prince Edward Island that is driving our economic success.

Our traditional sectors – agriculture, fisheries, and tourism – continue to perform well. In 2016, farm receipts reached almost a half a billion dollars, and the landed value for fisheries over a quarter of a billion dollars. Tourism generated over \$400 million in spending throughout the province. This diverse economic activity is leading to employment and investment in all parts of Prince Edward Island.

Notre gouvernement entend continuer à mettre l'accent sur ces secteurs économiques fondamentaux.

My Government will continue to place emphasis on these core economic sectors. With our Federal partner, we will continue to make investments in innovation in agriculture and fisheries that support the development of new products and processes to reach markets across Canada and around the world. For example, the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, developed in partnership with the Federal government, will stimulate economic growth, encourage innovation and expand domestic and international market access for our seafood products.

We will develop a Food Cluster that combines the best research and practice on food safety and security to underline our place as Canada's Food Island. As part of this, Government will work together with

organizations to support Islanders' ability to benefit from our local food system.

Our tourism economy is experiencing the fourth consecutive year of record growth, and all parts of our province are seeing benefits from the increased visitation. Working with industry, we will continue to invest in marketing PEI as a destination of choice for visitors from around the world. We will extend our efforts to build more visitation during shoulder seasons, and support tourism growth in all regions of the province. Working with federal partners, we will extend our marketing efforts to key international locations, including the US, UK, Europe and Asia.

While traditional sectors are experiencing solid and sustained growth, newer sectors such as biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, marine technology and information technology are all seeing increased investment and growth. My Government will work with leaders in each of these sectors to ensure we are taking full advantage of the investment, exports, employment and growth opportunities. Our newly-created Regional Economic Advisory Councils, with leadership from business and community, will identify strategic growth actions in each region of the province that will be treated as priorities by my Government.

Nous continuerons à travailler avec nos petites entreprises, dont nous reconnaissons l'esprit d'entrepreneuriat, la capacité à prendre des risques et l'apport dans nos communautés.

We will continue to work with our small businesses and recognize their entrepreneurial spirit, risk-taking and contributions to our communities. We will also continue to invest strategically in new business development. The Start-Up Zone has provided early support to 30 companies since its inception, leading to direct investment growth and employment opportunities. 45 companies have participated in LaunchPad, with an estimated 175 jobs created. My government will work with the business community to identify opportunities for enhanced collaboration or procurement of local solutions and services.

Prince Edward Island is doing well economically through export sales, and we will continue to support accelerated growth in these sectors. While growing exports in goods, we will take an approach that better integrates the export of services, including education and culture. We will launch this year a five-year plan for culture and creative industries that includes the establishment of a Creative Industry Market Development Program that will work with artists, enterprises and industry development groups to help grow creative business and better access new markets.

The increasing diversity of sectors in our economy is leading to more retail sales, increased building and construction, greater export sales, a high degree of business confidence, and more full-time employment. As underlined by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, Prince Edward Island is “on a tear” economically.

Strong Communities and Modern Infrastructure

Notre gouvernement a toujours insisté sur l'importance de créer des communautés fortes dans toute la province, investissant dans les infrastructures au besoin et instaurant des mesures de soutien à la gouvernance pour permettre aux acteurs locaux importants de promouvoir le développement et de favoriser une croissance judicieuse.

My Government has consistently focused on building strong communities throughout our province, providing needed infrastructure investment and governance supports to allow for strong local leadership to drive development and smart growth. The introduction of the Municipal Governance Act has provided a renewed context for strengthened local governance.

The establishment of the new Rural and Regional Development portfolio has encouraged greater collaboration with community and business leaders, as well as existing development organizations, to ensure coordinated approaches to regional growth opportunities.

Our collective development of infrastructure across PEI has been unparalleled, with more than \$300 million in provincial-federal

investment. This has included the new transmission cables, ensuring stable and secure energy supply for Island homes and businesses. And a \$90 million investment in water and wastewater projects in 19 Island communities is increasing capacity and ensuring safer supply. Improvements to roads and bridges provide safer passage and new growth opportunities for business and communities.

In this sitting, My Government will introduce a Capital Plan that commits to extensive infrastructure renewal and development throughout Prince Edward Island, taking advantage of our strong fiscal situation while not affecting our relative debt positioning.

We will escalate our plan to extend and enhance broadband services across the province. Increasingly, businesses and homes in all parts of Prince Edward Island need access to higher speed and higher capacity services. Whether required to connect to customers around the world or to connect to educational platforms in another city, the reality is that there are more devices needing more internet capacity everywhere. My Government will work with federal and business partners to provide a means to achieve the goal of higher speed internet services for our province. We have been working closely with our Internet Service Providers and are encouraged by the increased access to higher capacity services. We will build on this relationship and assist our private enterprise by building a high-speed fibre network – or backbone – from tip-to-tip of our province. Service providers will be able to connect to this network, making it easier for them to deliver high-speed to communities and homes throughout our province.

As our population grows, the state of housing supply has been challenging in some parts of our province. Access to appropriate and affordable housing can be limited. My Government will be developing a PEI Housing Strategy over the next year. As a first step, we will establish a Housing Supply Task Force to look at the best approaches in all parts of the province underway or planned to develop housing supply, and creative initiatives that can be encouraged to further provide accessible housing.

Clean Energy and a Sustainable Environment

L'Île-du-Prince-Édouard est une pionnière en matière d'énergie propre.

Prince Edward Island is a pioneer in clean energy.

Ahead of our time, we made significant early investments in wind energy that now make us the second strongest wind regime in the world after Denmark. Added to that, our energy from waste initiatives, biomass installations and waste management program place us ahead of all but Quebec when it comes to low per capita carbon emissions.

My Government's Energy Strategy focuses on moving us to greater electrification as a central strategy to reduce our carbon emissions, enhanced efficiency as a way to save on energy expenses per household, and an expanded role for more PEI-based solutions, particularly through additional renewable energy.

In early 2018, we will come forward with a Carbon Mitigation Strategy and a Carbon Adaptation Plan. The PEI approach to climate change and carbon pricing will respect the economic context and realities of our province while being consistent with our pledge to further lower our per capita emissions. We are working with our federal and regional government partners to strike the approach, including the path and timing of implementation, that will achieve optimal results for the economy and environment of our province and region.

Our approach will include infrastructure development and direct supports for Islanders to encourage a shift to electricity consumption and enhanced efficiencies, especially in our homes and buildings, as we directly tackle the impacts of climate change.

In this sitting, My Government will table the Water Act, the first time this legislation will be proposed for our province. The Act comes forward following extensive public consultations.

A Healthy Population

Qu'on l'évalue en fonction des investissements ou du nombre d'interactions, il n'y a pas meilleur service public dans notre province que celui des soins de santé.

By any measure of investment or interaction, there is no greater public service in our province than healthcare. In Budget 2017, My Government made the largest spending increase in a decade to health and wellness, and today we are investing \$640 million for the provision of health services for our residents.

The service to Islanders by health providers are significant: in the last year, 94,000 visits were made to emergency departments, with 71,000 visits made to Primary Care Health Centres; 45,000 Islanders submitted to Pharmacare; and 11,500 children participated in the Public Health Dental Program. The fact is we rely heavily on our health care providers.

My Government has placed an emphasis on wellness. The Universal Influenza Program makes it possible for all people, including vulnerable populations, to have access to free flu shots. The Opioid Action Plan, released last month, provides better education and coordination for populations who may be vulnerable. The Women's Wellness Program is fully functioning at the community level. Later this year, a Children's Wellbeing Report will be released and will help identify key issues and possible responses concerning the health and wellness of our young people.

A new seniors strategy is being developed by My Government to focus attention on the key issues facing our senior population, including health, wellness and housing. We are committed to supporting seniors to remain independent in their homes, including through expanded homecare. Our current Seniors Home Repair and Seniors Safe at Home programs have provided funding for home renovation needs. Additionally, we will develop a program to empower seniors to enjoy a better quality of life in their own homes through the funding of practical needed services. Through this program, services such as light housekeeping or snow removal will be provided to seniors, making it easier for

them to remain in their own homes and communities.

Increasing access to mental health services is a key pillar of our commitment to improving healthcare for Islanders. Last year, my Government released a 10-year mental health and addictions strategy, providing a roadmap to enhance and integrate mental health services in all parts of the province. Substantial aspects of the plan have been put in place, including programs for youth, families and women, as well as the provision of mental health walk-in clinics.

Notamment, notre gouvernement entend poursuivre la conception d'un complexe moderne de services de santé mentale à Charlottetown.

Notably, My Government has initiated and will move forward on the design of a modern campus of mental health services in Charlottetown.

With the mental health landscape changing, and with more complex needs associated, this development will provide improved inpatient services for all Islanders. And the Canadian Mental Health Association is leading the development of a suicide prevention strategy.

In September of this year, Student Well-being teams began working in the Montague and Westisle families of schools, advising, consulting and providing direct service to children and youth who are struggling with mental, social and physical health issues. Already, over eighty children and youth have benefited from direct one-on-one services provided by members of the Student Well-being teams. Over the next two years, these teams will be in place in all families of schools across the province.

My Government will continue the necessary work to prepare for the legalization of recreational cannabis. With principles of good public health and strong public safety, we will review public input and engage representatives from municipalities, policing, health, education and business as we develop legislation to be tabled in the Spring sitting. Central to our approach will be getting proceeds out of the hands of criminals, providing good public education

and striving for a consistent approach within our region.

Investing in our Future

Depuis quelques années, l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard est un chef de file au Canada dans le domaine de l'éducation de la petite enfance.

In recent years, Prince Edward Island has become a Canadian leader in early childhood education.

Through the creation of publicly funded centres and spaces, our youngest learners are getting a headstart in life. In partnership with the federal government, an additional \$10.5 million was confirmed this year to improve the quality of our early learning and childcare system, and expand access for under-served populations and children who are more vulnerable. These investments will lead to an even greater potential of success for children who participate.

My Government recognizes that attention is consistently required to best serve our most vulnerable children, and is actively developing better paths to address their needs. A Children's Lawyer is at work. She is representing the voice of children whose families are experiencing separation or divorce, or where the child's best interests are challenged due to parental conflict. In other measures to better serve vulnerable children and families, we have implemented the PEI Bridge, provided supervised access and exchange sites, put in place a parenting coordinator, and made improvements to maintenance enforcement programs. Following legislative changes, Island families are now able to benefit from Alternative Dispute Resolution. In the coming months, we will move forward with the additional recommendations of the review of the Child Protection Act.

Our current investments in education are at an historic high. More teachers have been added and additional classroom supports for education assistants and English as an additional language have been made available. My Government will continue to find the best mechanisms to invest in front-line instructional staff who will encourage our students to excel in their learning. We will review our overall approach to student

assessments to stay current with best practices and reflective of the overall needs of our learners.

We will strengthen the collaborative approach with the District Advisory Councils and further engage the Principals' Council on ways to strengthen the learning environment and potential for students in every part of Prince Edward Island. With the Learning Partner's Advisory Council, My Government will build on the commitment to work in partnership with community leaders and organizations to support innovative approaches to education in our province.

Nous continuerons également de mobiliser les communautés acadiennes et francophones à l'égard de la prestation d'un enseignement de qualité en français.

We will equally continue to engage with Acadian and francophone communities in the provision of quality French-language education.

Addressing Poverty

Prince Edward Island has benefited in many ways from our rapidly developing economy and growing population. At the same time, My Government is mindful that, in times of rapid change, those who are most vulnerable can fall behind. We are committed to a future together in which all Islanders will have opportunities to participate to their fullest capacity.

Our work towards this goal begins with building a better understanding of the challenges before us, and the root causes of those challenges. Recently released census data paint a picture of the struggles facing many Islanders. While the proportion of Islanders in very low income is better than in most other provinces, we need to strive to provide more possibilities for Island households and families to exit from positions of lower income.

Notre gouvernement lancera cette année une stratégie globale de réduction de la pauvreté.

My Government will introduce a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy this year.

With the engagement of a Poverty Reduction Advisory Council, drawn from communities across the province, we will look at all aspects of poverty, including housing, food, education, employment and health, with a report in 2018.

Open Government and Active Democracy

Les Insulaires ont raison d'être fiers de leur longue tradition de participation au processus démocratique.

Islanders are justifiably proud of a historic tradition of democratic participation.

In fact, voter turnout on the Island is the envy of jurisdictions across Canada. As a small jurisdiction, our elected officials take pride in being accessible to the people they represent, and take seriously their representation in this Assembly.

As many Islanders are aware, Government has committed to a clear referendum question on democratic renewal. To ensure a high level of participation and engagement in this important initiative, the referendum will be held in conjunction with the next Provincial Election.

On a topic of such significance, Government takes its role very seriously – and must do everything within the scope of its responsibility to assure clarity, fairness and the inclusion of all voices during this process.

To that end, Government will request the creation of a map that clearly lays out the geographic boundaries inherent in the mixed member proportional model considered in the 2016 plebiscite. Furthermore, legislation will be developed to be debated in 2018 to permit all members to offer their input and advice. This legislation will include a clear referendum question – as well as the rules required for a fair and transparent process.

By taking the responsible perspective of ensuring a fully informed and vibrant process, Government is confident of a well-considered referendum outcome based on high voter participation.

We will continue to take an ambitious path on open and transparent government. The ministerial mandate letters, made public for the first time ever by My Government, have

been updated and will be posted this week. In this sitting, we will re-introduce Public Interest Disclosure legislation. And the *Lobbyist Registration Act* will also be introduced.

My Government will put forward a discussion document on Campaign Finance Reform for consideration of all members and all sides of this Assembly. We will launch during this sitting a process to review and update the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

These improvements will add to our record of initiatives that show our willingness to conduct the business of government differently than in the past.

Correspondingly, we will in the coming months launch a powerful open data platform to enhance public access to government data.

Conclusion

We have made significant progress in the 30 months since the commencement of this 65th General Assembly, particularly on the issues that matter most to Islanders. Our prosperity as a province has never been greater, and the resulting confidence held by citizens and businesses leads the region. It is in this context of abundance and optimism that we have an even greater opportunity to advance – to build on our strengths and better tackle our challenges. To build strong communities and regional economies supported by more modern infrastructure and public services. To address our most difficult social issues by working together. To provide a greater sense of possibility for our young people. To both support and draw strength from our senior population. To welcome and embrace the diverse perspectives and cultures which comprise our mighty Island.

Au cours des 30 derniers mois, notre gouvernement n'a pas ménagé ses efforts. En collaboration avec de nombreux partenaires, nous avons accompli beaucoup de choses. Aujourd'hui, nous nous engageons à redoubler d'ardeur pour en accomplir encore davantage dans l'intérêt de tous les citoyens de notre province.

As a Government, we have been hard at work during these 30 months. In

collaboration with many partners, we have achieved much. Now, we commit to work hard to achieve even more on behalf of everyone in this province.

During this session, Members of this Assembly will be asked to consider a number of Government bills:

- *Water Act*;
- *Act to Amend the Early Learning and Child Care Act*;
- *Act to Amend the Child Protection Act*;
- *Planning Statutes Act*;
- *Act to Amend the PEI Housing Corporation Act*;
- *Act to Amend the Real Property Tax Act*;
- *Business Corporations Act*;
- *Act to Amend the Health Services Act*;
- *Lobbyist Registration Act*; and
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act*.

My Government has placed significant emphasis on modernizing the legislative foundations for our province. The Water Act is the first piece of such legislation ever proposed. The Business Corporations Act seeks to update legislation that has been unchanged since 1888. Previously, this Assembly has made significant changes to a 75-year old Municipal Governance Act unchanged and an Education Act unchanged since the 1970s.

Je me joins à tous les Insulaires pour vous souhaiter bonne chance dans votre travail législatif et stratégique au sein de cette Assemblée. Puisse la Divine Providence vous guider dans vos délibérations.

I join all Islanders in wishing you well in your legislative and policy work in this Assembly.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.

Speaker: Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled An Act to celebrate Prince Edward Island small businesses and recognize the entrepreneurial spirit, risk-taking, and confidence exhibited by business leaders and workers in communities throughout our province, and I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that the bill be received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: An Act to celebrate Prince Edward Island small businesses and recognize the entrepreneurial spirit, risk-taking, and confidence exhibited by business leaders and workers in communities throughout our province, read a first time.

Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members and guests, I have now received copies of Her Honour's most gracious speech and copies will be made available in the corridor as you exit.

Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that the Speech of Her Honour be taken into consideration on the next sitting day of this House and that it be the first order the day on every subsequent sitting until disposed of.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader that when this House adjourns, it stand adjourned until Wednesday, November 15th, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: I move, seconded by the hon. Government House Leader, that this House do now adjourn.

Speaker: Before putting the question, I would like to remind all hon. members and

guests that the traditional Speaker's Reception will be held in the Murphy's Community Centre, 200 Richmond St.

After adjournment, I look forward to seeing everybody over there for some tea and crumpets and camaraderie, and some good music, too. I understand there is a good band there.

Shall it carry? Carried.

Okay, we'll see you across the street.

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