

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS	13
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	21
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK (Spirit of Cooperation)	21
TIGNISH-PALMER ROAD (Her Honour Antoinette Perry)	21
RUSTICO-EMERALD ("Chase the Ace" Format Fundraisers)	22
ORAL QUESTIONS	22
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Replacement of Hillsborough Hospital)	22
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mental health campus and health care professionals)	24
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mental health crisis on PEI)	24
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mental health campus and health care professionals (further)	25
GEORGETOWN-ST. PETERS (Mental health crisis on PEI (further)	26
MORELL-MERMAID (Lack of coverage for psychiatric care)	27
LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY (Resignations and retirements of psychiatrists)	29
CHARLOTTETOWN-LEWIS POINT (Concussions in hockey)	30
SUMMERSIDE-WILMOT (The Humble Barber liquor license)	31
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Large-scale irrigation ponds)	32
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Public information meetings re: ponds)	33
KENSINGTON-MALPEQUE (Wells drilled for irrigation ponds)	34
STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS	35
EDUCATION, EARLY LEARNING AND CULTURE (New Teachers and Supports)	35
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY (Investments in our National Highway System and Collector Roads)	37
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM (World Diabetes Day)	40
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	42
INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS	42
BILL 3 – An Act to Amend the Child Protection Act	42
BILL 6 – An Act to Amend the Health Services Act	42

BILL 10 – An Act to Repeal the Registered Nurses Act	43
BILL 11 – An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act	43
ORDERS OF THE DAY (GOVERNMENT)	43
RESPONSE TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE	43
CHARLOTTETOWN-VICTORIA PARK	43
ADJOURNED.....	63

The Legislature met at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of
Guests

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome back to you and staff of the Assembly. A number of new roles – colleagues – particular welcome to the Leader of the Opposition in his new capacity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier MacLauchlan: Note, of course, an absence being former Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, the member for Charlottetown-Parkdale, let's recognize his many contributions.

Welcome staff of course, of the Assembly, those in the gallery, and those watching from home, including my home district, and in particular, the good folks watching from the Homestead in Stanhope – a group there including Thelma Worth, who recently celebrated her 88th birthday.

In recognizing guests in the gallery, let me start with those who've come from the farthest: Liu Chunyan, known in China and elsewhere as 'Ladybug', as the most loved children's television host and creator in China, with a daily audience of more than 20 million children – work also in film, on stage, in books, and in new media, including virtual reality and visiting Prince Edward Island in her work and quest to introduce children around the world to the wonders of nature. Ladybug is accompanied by her assistant, Mu Shan and by Iris Zhu. I spent some time with Ladybug earlier this week and, in a few words, her whole narrative that she shares with that huge audience is that small can be big. So, the fit with Prince Edward Island is welcome.

Tonight will be the President's Excellence Awards for the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce – last night, Kensington and Area Chamber of Commerce – and through those great organizations and others to recognize the

work of business leaders and enterprisers and workers throughout our province.

One great lady that will no longer be with us as our oldest Islander, Margaret Shaw, passed away on Saturday night, having turned 109 on the first of April. I had the opportunity on a number of occasions to visit with Mrs. Shaw in the residence she's had most recently, at the Atlantic Baptist home, she's lived in other areas. Her funeral's this afternoon at her longtime community of Desable. Strong person, a great community and family person, and a wit right to the last that I got to enjoy in different ways. We extend condolences to the family. And note that at the time of her passing, Margaret Shaw was the ninth oldest resident of Canada. You start to realize what it is to achieve that great age.

Late last week we had the opportunity to welcome New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant to a great gathering here in Prince Edward Island and to affirm the great partnership that we have with Premier Gallant.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and welcome colleagues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's certainly an honour for me to rise today in my new capacity here in the Legislative Assembly and I look forward to a spirited debate throughout the fall session as we look at different pieces of legislation, not only from of course the government side, but I know opposition is going to be bringing some very important pieces of legislation forward as well.

I'd be remiss, as well, if I didn't acknowledge the great support from my own home constituents and also my mother, who is a resident at the Beach Grove Home.

I want to echo the Premier's sentiments with regards to Margaret Shaw's passing and send on my condolences to the Shaw family and the Smith family. We are connected

through marriage, but we're also connected through the great red soil here on PEI. My parents have a summer home on Archies Shore, which we had to drive past Margaret and Archie's homestead to get down to the shore, and what the Premier said; she was a magnificent individual, a loving lady, and she will definitely be missed. Again, my condolences to the family.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It's certainly a pleasure to be back in the House, and I wish everybody on all sides of the House a civil and productive session ahead.

I also would like to offer my congratulations to the official leader, the new official Leader of the Opposition, and congratulations on your recent success and I wish you all the best in the House.

I would also like to say thank you to the former minister of education for his over 10 years of public service to this province, and on what became a close, personal, and a very productive working relationship, so I want to thank him for all of his years of service.

I also want to say thank you to a couple of people, Barbara and Leith Burge who watch here in Charlottetown every day, and wanted me to say on the first day of the sitting they do that, and in my own district to Preston and Liz Campbell; hello Preston, hello Liz. It's great that you watch from the Argyle Shore every day.

On that note, I, too, would like to pass on my condolences to Margaret Shaw's family. Like the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I attended the wake yesterday, and an extraordinary lady with an incredible lineage she has left here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Carleton.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome, all the members, back to the House and welcome everybody in the gallery, and also, the media; glad to see you back in also.

I'd like to say hello to everybody in Borden-Kinkora, and thank you for being with me for the last two years in the role I had, and all the best to my partner next door here.

I'd like to also say hello to everybody in Victoria, in Crapaud, and Westmoreland. Over the summer I spent a considerable amount of time down in that area, getting to know who lives down there and what the businesses are and the community in general, and I've enjoyed that very much. I expressly want to say thank you too, for them inviting me in my home and calling me and reaching out on different issues that are important to them.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to be back, and welcome back to everyone in the Legislature, and especially those that are watching at home from my District of Tyne Valley-Linkletter and right across PEI.

I, today, also would like to thank our Lieutenant Governor for hosting us last night at Government House, for all of us to get together, to have some conversations and just some social time together before we get down to the work of the Legislature.

I want to congratulate her on her first Throne Speech as well.

Too, I was very privileged on Monday night when the Premier and I attended a great – and the leader – the Member from Belfast-Murray River was also there, and the member from Lewis Point attended a great fundraiser on behalf of the Women's

Network at the Guild to be entertained by the phenomenal Irish Mythen, who I might add, is now performing this week in the Sydney Opera House to a sold-out concert and will be proudly displaying the PEI flag on the stage behind her, which was presented to her that evening during that wonderful concert.

I also would like to mention and say hello to my mom, and I know she's watching. We had a bit of a scare with her health this week, but thanks to the great care at Prince County Hospital, she's back at the Stewart Memorial manor, and she was worried that she was going to miss the session of the House today. So, I want to send out hello to Pauline Dymont, and I think she and some of the residents that live at Stewart Memorial are attending the Stewart Memorial Hospital tea today, which is always a great event in the community.

Also, I'd like to mention –

Premier MacLauchlan: (Indistinct).

Ms. Biggar: Oh yes, I'd forgot to mention that at our event on Monday evening that *The Guardian* reporter, Teresa Wright, I think, who is back there with us today did a great job as emcee at the fundraiser. It was a wonderful evening all around.

Welcome back everyone, and thank you so much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's such an honour and a privilege to be back in this room again with all of our colleagues and all of our colleagues across the floor.

I'd like to say hello to everyone in Montague-Kilmuir, who are tuned in today. I'd like to send congratulations out to all the community members in the town of Montague for the great work and the activities that they've had over the last number of months in celebrating 100 years for the town of Montague. The volunteers and the staff just did an excellent job. There was so much there to see and so much

entertainment. They drew so many people to the town to celebrate and enjoy it with them.

I wish everyone great success in this House this year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

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

I want to recognize the first responders here on Prince Edward Island. Last night, I was coming by the bypass and there was a major accident on the bypass.

I just want to say, the cooperation, the work that the first responders were doing at this site, the ambulances were there. The tow trucks were there. The police officers were there; the Charlottetown Police Department. They're working together. It was phenomenal. I got to commend them all.

I also have to commend the RCMP because I know the Charlottetown police were extremely busy at this site. It was a major accident. They had a lot of work in front of them. You could see the RCMP coming into the city to take over, to backstop the city police there.

I want to say a great thank you to the RCMP, and all first responders on Prince Edward Island. They do a tremendous job.

I also want to talk about a great night on Friday night. The place was packed. The enthusiasm was great. The speeches were phenomenal. I can assure each and every Islander here, Prince Edward Island is on the right track and even the –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – premier of New Brunswick gave accolades to our Premier, how well he is on the national stage. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his role here. I hope there are some good questions today because we haven't had many, yet.

Thank you.

Mr. Myers: Oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fox: The Green Party is trying.

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise today and welcome back all colleagues to the House, across the floor, on this side of the floor.

It's been a pretty incredible summer, for me, of course, participating in part of the democratic process. Congratulations to our new Leader of the Opposition.

I just wanted to say thank you to all the Islanders that I met across the province who welcomed me into your home. I know a lot of them are regular watchers of the Legislative Assembly, so hello to you and thank you for that.

I also, of course, I do want to say hello to everybody in District 18 Rustico-Emerald. It's great to be your voice. I think that the experience this summer will give me even a stronger voice for our district.

I wanted to welcome back the media, as well. Maybe, perhaps, we should call it just the desk around the corner over here.

I also wanted to wish a happy birthday to Anna Keenan and Anne McLean from my district.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

It certainly is a privilege to rise today and welcome all members back into the Legislature on this side of the rail, today, as well.

I'd also like to welcome our member from outside the rail; Eddie Lund is with us today. It's always good to have Eddie in and watching what's going on and keeping us all in tune where we need to be.

I'd also like to pass along my sympathies and condolences to the Shaw family, the Smith family. The family of Margaret Shaw, a resident of my community at Atlantic Baptist, a lady who I've got to know quite well over the last few years, and she will be missed around the home. She will be missed by her family. She always had some good advice to either offer myself, or the Premier, when we went to visit. We will think fondly of her as we head out the road into future elections and think of her and the advice that she gave us.

I also would like to, at this time, offer my great congratulations to our former colleague and my good friend, Doug Currie. First time I have been able to say his name on the floor of the Legislature, for all of the support and advice that he has given me over the last number of years in my role when I become a Cabinet minister on this side of the floor. Thank you, to Doug Currie, for that. I wish him all the best at whatever the future holds for him, and I'm sure Doug will be busy in the very near future.

Also, too, with his departure, I have been spending a fair bit of time, not only in District 10, but in District 11, over the last few weeks, so things are well in hand in that district and looking forward to a big future in District 11.

I also would like to say hello to all residents of the Mount Continuing Care Community facility in my riding. A lot of the residents there tune in faithfully, so I'd like to say hello to my mother, Agnes Mitchell, and as well, to Sister Mary Deighan who follows along faithfully, I think pretty near every day.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gallant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly a pleasure to be back in the Legislative Assembly and I'd like to welcome Eddie Lund into the gallery and all the other guests.

I, also, would like to welcome the media back and the staff, and all the new Pages, and yourself, Mr. Speaker.

This past weekend, I know everyone in this room, as well as I did, attended November 11 services. I'd like to just thank all of our veterans past, present and service personnel for the bravery they showed to ensure our freedom into the future.

With that, I'd also like to say hello to everyone back in District 24 Evangeline-Miscouche.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

It's a pleasure to rise on this side of the floor today, and I'd like to welcome one of my constituents, Akins, Akinsola, to the Chamber here today. I think it may be his first time here, so welcome. Also, to Eddie Lund and to the new Pages; welcome to them.

In that regard, I'd also like to welcome the new Lieutenant Governor to, what I call my neighbourhood. It is in Charlottetown-Victoria Park, but it's right across the road from us and we take pretty significant ownership over there.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of the staff in my department that have spent considerable time doing their best to bring me up to speed. There's still a lot of work to do in that regard, and I'd like to thank Doug Currie for his work in this portfolio in advance. Doug was somebody who I shared with regularly. He was actually a hockey coach of mine early in my career. I'm not sure what that says about my abilities at hockey these days, but he did –

Mr. LaVie: Or his coaching.

Mr. Myers: Something didn't sink in.

Mr. J. Brown: – he did great work for the people on Prince Edward Island for the better part of a dozen years here in this Legislature and it's certainly not an easy occupation. I think, we as Islanders of every stripe, do owe him, and those that do that, a huge debt of gratitude, so I'd like to recognize that here today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, also, would like to wish everyone back to the Legislature. It is, anytime you get to stand up in the Legislature here, it is a privilege for anyone to stand up in here.

I would like to give a couple of shout-outs to birthdays today. I had a couple of phone calls there, if I would wish a couple of birthdays, and it's Jason Rose. He's a young fellow from up east and he is 20 years old today. I had a big one come in from the staff at the fisheries department down in Montague, and there's a big birthday down there for Cheryl Campbell and I won't divulge Cheryl's age, but it came in from John Jamieson and the staff to wish her a very happy birthday today. She works down at fisheries in Montague.

I also, too, would like to give a big shout-out to Doug Currie and all the best into his future. I know I've been here for six years now and Doug always had a big portfolio, either health or education, and big portfolios. I had some pretty harsh questions for Mr. Currie at the time, and he took it well and they were pretty hard questions. He always handled himself well, but he did – he always provided. He didn't always provide, but there were some situations –

Mr. Myers: He gives and then he takes it away.

Mr. LaVie: There were some situations –

Leader of the Opposition: Starting to sound like him.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: His hands were tied. That's probably what –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: There it is.

Mr. LaVie: and he just couldn't come across, and it's probably why he's not with us today. He always did his best; him and I had some great shout-outs. He'd come on to me and I'd come on to him, but at the end of the day we were friends and we got the job done – and that's why we got more ambulance coverage.

We got a new school and we're getting a second school and that's because he did provide, he did come across, and he did work with us. That's what happens when you work together. So, I'm hoping in this session we can all work together and make it better for Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lavie: I do wish Doug Currie all the best into the future. I know Doug well and I hope he spends some time with his girls because that was one of his major topics in the House here all the time – was spending time with his girls. So, here's a time for Doug to spend time with his girls.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well that would bring a tear to a glass eye, I'm sure.

I'd like to welcome everyone back into the House today. It's a pleasure to be back. I'm saying hello to everyone in District 4 – from Murray Harbour to Murray River and right through to Newtown – and really, on to Orwell and the Scentia Road because that'll be part of District 4 come the next election.

Lots of – I think 500 more voters. So, I look forward to meeting all those people and having a chat about government and where we're going.

I'd like to thank Her Honour, as well, for last night. It was a wonderful event – and congratulate her on her new position. I'd like to congratulate the official Leader of the Opposition on his new role and as well, a shout-out to the Women's Network PEI for the great event they had – and Irish Mythen. I love hearing Irish. I've heard her a number of times and to think she's performing at the opera house – I wish I was going there too because it's a fantastic place to hear a concert.

I'd like to congratulate the hon. Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture on his new role. I know that you will work hard to ensure that the rural schools remain open and thriving. On that note, I would look to the minister for help with the early learning centre for Belfast – to ensure that our school grows –

Mr. LaVie: Pressure (Indistinct)

Ms. Compton: – and that we have more people in our community.

And on that note, I look forward to working with everyone on the floor of the House during this session.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Rural and Regional Development.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to see you back to work, as well as all the rest of the colleagues here in the Legislature.

I'd like to shout-out to all the folks in the public gallery – welcome them and, of course, all the good people of Alberton-Roseville that may be at home watching.

I, too, would like to give a shout-out to Doug Currie. Doug was a – worked with him for over ten years and one of my best personal political accomplishments was with

Doug and I won't say anymore about it, but I'm sure he knows exactly what it was. It was of great benefit to a certain family in my district.

That being said, I'd also like to compliment the hon. Member from Souris-Elmira on his choice of attire. I think he chose a really good tie there today.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. Murphy: Anyway, I wish everyone a successful session here in the Legislature.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to be back for another fall session. I want to start out by saying Happy Birthday to Garry Herring, who is the chair of the Murray Harbour Community Council.

I'd also like to give a shout-out to Doug Currie and congratulate him on his retirement. I'm sure he was frustrated coming on the end and lots of people can see why he would be. I know he worked tirelessly. He always took my call. We didn't always agree. We had some great debates over the years. He definitely challenged me often in debate. I think he made me a better debater. I want to wish him well with whatever he chooses to do from here on in.

I'd also like to talk about an event myself that was well attended. We had a leadership this fall. We had two candidates who did a great job: the Member from Rustico-Emerald and, of course, the Leader of the Opposition here, were the two that were entered in that race. It was great right across Prince Edward Island. There was great interest. Lots of new members signed up. Lots of old members were reinvigorated. Lots of people came out to watch the event, to watch debates, to watch the end result and stick around for the weekend in Brudenell.

It was a wonderful weekend. It was a reinvigorating time for the party and I do

think that having a contested leadership is what was the best thing for our party; it's going to make our party stronger. Not having a coronation of a king on our side; they both had to fight hard for it and I want to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for a great job, and the Member from Rustico-Emerald for a great job as well.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to welcome you back to the Legislature and all the members here today as well, and those in the gallery. I especially would like to welcome the Pages. I know they do terrific work for us here. They help keep the Legislature running. I'd like to also welcome everyone watching from home in Summerside. I know folks were really interested all summer and couldn't wait for us to get back in so that they could watch us.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to see you in your chair and healthy as a trout again.

First of all, the Shaw family, I wish to send out my condolences to them and also the Stretch family; a tragic accident this week and the loss of a life in that family. My respect goes out to them.

Tourism operators and entrepreneurs of Prince Edward Island, after the year we have just gone through, and we're still going through it; I wish them all the best in the future. Doug Currie – Doug always referred to me as a third-line centre. Now that he's gone, maybe I'll move up to the second line, but I appreciate everything he done for me for being a rookie coming in in 2015. I certainly leaned on him from time to time.

I just wanted to mention also, District 17 dinner is Saturday night and the minister of environment will be speaking at that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we begin our fall session, I'd like to take the time to thank the residents of Charlottetown-Lewis Point for the confidence they have, again, placed in me to be their voice in the Legislative Assembly. I always appreciate their advice and their wisdom.

I'd also like to join my colleagues in congratulating the Leader of the Opposition in his new role, and I hope that he will enjoy many, many years in his new role.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise here today and welcome everyone here on this side of the rail; both that side of the room and this side of the room, back to the Legislature for another busy session. I'd also like to congratulate seatmate, the Member from Charlottetown-Brighton, on his recent appointment as the minister of education. I think it's a very fitting title for you and I know you'll do wonderful work.

I'd also like to wish all the best to the former minister of education, Doug Currie, who for the last four sessions was my seatmate as well and I learned a lot from him. He always had some words of wisdom while I was on my feet. The one thing I will say is I won't miss him messing up my desk, and that's just a word of warning to my new seatmate to stay on his side of the desk.

I'd also like to congratulate the City of Summerside for an unbelievable Road to the

Roar curling event that took place last weekend. They broke attendance records. They exceeded every expectation and they're looking forward to doing it again. I want to congratulate the City of Summerside, JP Desrosiers and his team down at Credit Union Place for a very successful event in what we now call the shoulder season. So to bring that many people into Summerside, spending money, buying gas, eating meals, booking hotel rooms; it really means a lot to the community.

Mr. Speaker, as I now go to sit down, I wish you all the best in your chair and I look forward to your leadership over the next few weeks.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Did I miss anybody?

Ms. Casey: Don't think so.

Speaker: Don't think so.

Leader of the Opposition: (Indistinct)

Speaker: Before I call for members statements, I think I should get in on the act, too.

Leader of the Opposition: Call the hour.

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Speaker: I just wanted to take this opportunity to welcome all hon. members back and to certainly wish everybody a successful session. I'm sure we'll have it.

It's nice to see everybody in fine fiddles and in the very best of humour too, I might add.

Congratulations to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for your new position and I wish you all the best in your time in here.

Also, certainly welcome all the guests in the gallery. In particular, I want to mention a young fellow way over there in the corner, Justin Clory.

Justin has joined us. He's our fall intern student from the University of Prince

Edward Island. As a student intern, Justin assists the staff at the Assembly in carrying out research, planning meetings and conferences, supporting Assembly operations and as they say, other duties as required.

Justin, I understand you were a great help yesterday. I know that you were because I saw you in action over there. I want everybody to please join me in welcoming Justin to our Chamber.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

Spirit of Cooperation

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

I'm pleased to rise in the House today as we begin the fall Legislature session. As Government House Leader I look forward to working with my colleagues from all the parties on the day-to-day business of the Legislature.

We are here because of the trust placed in us by Islanders. They have high expectations that we will come together, work together in the spirit of cooperation for the benefit of everyone. We are accountable to them for those expectations.

Let us work together and be open to compromise and finding common ground in our debates and in our discussions keeping in mind the wise words of Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Like all other MLAs here today, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve my constituents and the people of Prince Edward Island as an elected member of the Legislature.

In the spirit of cooperation today I ask for the questions from both parties today to be given to me and as of today, as of this time, right now, they haven't given them to me, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Myers: You'll get them in a minute.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Her Honour Antoinette Perry

Mr. Perry: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to congratulate Her Honour Antoinette Perry on being appointed as Prince Edward Island's 42nd Lieutenant Governor.

I'm especially proud, as she is a resident of Tignish and she has been and continues to be a significant asset to our town. She spent 32 years as a French and music teacher at the Tignish Elementary School. She's an organist at the St. Simon and St. Jude church in Tignish. She is very active with the arts in West Prince, helping to establish the West Prince Music Festival, as well as directing the Tignish Bicentennial Choir.

Her installation ceremony took place at the Tignish Parish Centre on Friday, October 20th, making this the first time in both Prince Edward Island's and Canadian history that a Lieutenant Governor was sworn in outside of the province's capital city. I'm especially proud that this happened in my town of Tignish.

Her Honour Antoinette Perry, is also the first Acadian woman to be appointed to this position. She is the first Lieutenant Governor from Tignish since the Hon. Joseph Alphonsus Bernard's term ended in 1950.

I look forward to witnessing all of her accomplishments that Her Honour Antoinette Perry, will fulfill over the next five years.

I wish her luck, and I am confident that she will find great success in this position as the 42nd Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

“Chase the Ace” Format Fundraisers

Mr. Trivers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today I rise to recognize the hardworking volunteers in our Island communities who have taken the initiative to hold Chase the Ace format fundraisers.

Islanders have long recognized the enormous benefit that service organizations bring to Prince Edward Island. Some may even argue that these community organizations are the foundation of the Island lifestyle that is the envy of so many.

That is why volunteers have worked so hard donating time and raising money to support these critical entities, from community halls and service clubs, the volunteer fire departments.

The recent rise in popularity of the Chase the Ace fundraising format has been a boon financially for communities, raising millions of dollars locally that are used locally.

Also, the format promotes regular community gatherings that create and strengthen relationships.

Because of the volunteer efforts, the administration costs for Chase the Ace are low, and almost all the money is used for local projects that benefit the very people who contribute.

Island communities have stepped up and are using Chase the Ace fundraisers to fill a void that exists, partially because sources like the Island community fund are defunct.

Yet, a glaring exception to the low cost of operation is the lottery license fee that is levied at 2% of the amount of the prize value payable to the Minister of Finance of the PEI government.

A significant amount of money that is taken into government coffers, instead of staying in the communities where volunteers have worked so hard to raise it.

Mr. LaVie: Stays in their pocket.

Mr. Trivers: I salute the hardworking community volunteers who use the Chase the Ace format to raise funds, the community building activity they create and lament that 2% of the proceeds must be taken from the community as a fee to the PEI government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LaVie: Hands in their pockets.

Mr. Fox: Hands in their pockets, that’s right.

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Over the last several months, I have travelled Prince Edward Island extensively and I have been meeting with and listening to Islanders.

What I have heard has been a collective plea from Islanders that this mental health crisis that we’re experiencing here on PEI would finally receive the urgent and immediate attention that it certainly deserves.

Replacement of Hillsborough Hospital

My question to the Premier: Premier, when will the aging Hillsborough Hospital finally be replaced with a modern mental health campus?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

We were in this Chamber yesterday and heard, in the Speech From the Throne, a firm indication that the development and design of mental health campus to observe Islanders to meet pressing needs to come up

with 21st Century solutions to concerns and challenges in the health system and with mental health, will be addressed through that facility. I look forward to hearing more about that in the course of this session.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, a reminder to everybody, which I forgot earlier, I do have the stopwatch; 40 seconds. It's not a prop.

Go ahead, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

What I hear from Islanders is that we need action now. Action now for better access to mental health services, this is something our caucus has been advocating for, for years.

Again, question to the Premier: Why haven't you shown leadership as Premier and demanded a quicker timeline for replacing the Hillsborough Hospital with a mental health campus?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, our government takes entirely seriously all of the ways in which we, as a province, are called on to serve the needs and mental health. Indeed, it is the number one priority for our government. I believe that's true in this Assembly and working with community partners and professionals in the health care system across the province.

We, indeed, and I repeat; it's front and centre in the throne speech of yesterday. I think that's a pretty good indication of exactly the priority that our government gives.

We look forward to the resources and the efforts and the design and the new campus facility being developed as a top priority.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Moving fast wasn't an issue for this Premier this past winter when he tried to close rural schools. Moving fast wasn't an issue for this Premier while he started paving fields out in farmers' fields out in Cornwall.

Government was told in 2013 that the Hillsborough Hospital needed replacing. Again, I say: enough of the studies. Enough of the lectures, we need action now.

Again, question to the Premier: After 10 years in office, how is it that replacing the Hillsborough Hospital only warrants three sentences in your throne speech when we have a serious mental health issue here on PEI?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the work that is underway, and that will be further brought forward through the Capital Budget that we will hear very early in this session. Indeed, will be one of the high points of our work and then our consideration as an Assembly in this session, in this sitting, will indeed be an opportunity to see further, the priority, the resources, the commitment and the opportunity.

Let me say, the opportunity to develop and to design 21st Century services that reflect the needs of Islanders, the talents of our workforce in the health care system and the collaboration with communities and with people who care about mental health throughout Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's obvious that this Premier hasn't been listening to Islanders. It's obvious that this Premier hasn't been sitting down and talking to health care professionals and listening to the issues that are out there.

You know what? I have been listening. Our entire caucus has been listening. What they're telling us is about the long wait times for help because of staff shortages. They're telling us about staff burnout from trying to plug huge holes in the systems. They're telling us that we need to have a better job of finding and keeping mental health professionals here on PEI.

Mental health campus and health care professionals

Again, a question to the Premier: Will you commit here, today, that the new mental health campus will have the teaching hospital component to help recruit and retain health care professionals?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've got great leadership in the professional team that provides mental health services to Prince Edward Island.

Indeed, they have, under the leadership of Dr. Heather Keizer, developed a plan that has been presented here in committee that would, indeed, see the evolution of a team that would be committed, that would have an expertise where professionals would locate and want to be, would have a desire that Prince Edward Island become a destination for health professionals.

Let me say, that in addition to that, and I think it's very important to see it in its fullness – we committed in our spring Budget, our operating Budget, 35 million extra dollars for health care, the largest increase in more than 10 years.

With those resources, we are already rolling out and developing in a collaborative way,

effective programs to serve the mental health needs of Prince Edward Islanders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Not only does this Premier have a hard time following the direction and listening to Islanders, he doesn't seem to be able to follow your instructions, either because I don't think he has kept it under 40 seconds yet, this afternoon –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: – having a –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) that.

Leader of the Opposition: – teaching hospital –

Speaker: Carry on, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Having a teaching hospital component in our mental health services will help recruit and retain skilled workers and for once, we can show leadership on this file here on PEI.

I think that this crisis, actually, is an opportunity to take a leap forward. When it comes to mental health services, why is this government shying away when they could be showing true leadership?

I think, I believe, it's time that we listen and we act.

Mental health crisis on PEI

Again, question to the Premier: Why is your government so reluctant to think outside of the box about addressing the Island's mental health crisis?

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: There's a leadership (Indistinct)

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

An Hon. Member: Oh!

Mr. Myers: Tuck and roll.

Mr. Henderson: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, as the hon. Premier mentioned earlier, mental health is a high priority for myself, as minister, as well as ourselves, in government.

Obviously, in the throne speech we've made a significant announcement by stating that we're going to do a – develop the concept of a mental health campus, and I think that's the –

An Hon. Member: Concept.

Mr. Henderson: – the key in that is that we're developing this and we're hiring professionals to develop, to meet the demands and changing needs of mental health as we move forward. This isn't all about institutionalizing individuals with mental health, it's about trying to provide them the potential services so they can reintegrate and be productive in our community in Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Great answer.

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

It was great to see the minister of health up on his feet and talk about how in-depth their conversation in the throne speech was, but I'd like to bring it back to him again.

Three sentences in the entire speech about one of the most serious issues facing Islanders here today.

I think we have a chance to build on our postsecondary institutions to help meet the challenge and leverage world-class research here on PEI with regards to mental health.

It would appear that the Premier and the health minister lack vision and leadership to do what is right for Islanders.

Mental health campus and health care professionals (further)

So, again, to the Premier: Premier, will you commit here today to engaging postsecondary institutions about developing a mental health cluster focused on research and training here on Prince Edward Island?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) leadership; Tories showing the way.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, the services that have been developed and implemented, even since this House met, are a great example of the commitment and the resources and the concern that we have as a government for mental health in our province. I would point to the extension and the opening of clinics now in five communities in our province that are open seven days a week that have served more than 500 Prince Edward Islanders in that time.

We can look, as has been pointed out, at the work that's being done to develop the mental health campus. We can look at the work that is being done – and this has been developed, really, in the last two months – for the student wellbeing teams that are serving students in two school families, soon to become all of the families of schools, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for showing leadership on this file. It's long-needed leadership on this file.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. Myers: The article from *The Guardian* today proves that this government isn't taking mental health seriously.

Premier, your own minister has refused to call this current situation a crisis.

Mental health crisis on PEI (further)

A question to the Premier: If a third of the police force didn't show up to work on any given day and crime rates increased, would you call that a crisis?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Mr. Speaker, if we had that level of need in the police force and we had the resources, we would recruit, and that is exactly what we are doing in the area of psychiatry and psychology. We are also building multidisciplinary teams that are acting in a positive and a timely way to build confidence, to serve the needs of Prince Edward Islanders, and we have confidence in the health professional team and the community partners that are responding to the mental health needs in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Premier fails to understand that he's a third short in the complement, and for 10 years services have been eroded under the people who require them, who need them on a daily basis.

Go back to the Premier again: If we only had a third of the plows – if a third of the plows weren't on the roads after a major blizzard here on Prince Edward Island, and people we stuck in their homes for days and

days on end, would you consider that a crisis?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think the realities are – is that yes we have a shortage of psychiatry no different than many other jurisdictions across this country that are facing, but the reality is we're doing some really good work here. We have Dr. Keizer, Verna Ryan; they've been putting together a plan, and that plan has been unfolding here as we speak.

To the point, we had identified that there may be some significant challenges over the coming months until we can get these positions filled, but our recruitment and retention department have been doing great work. And, in fact, we have two letters of offer signed for doctors to psychiatry, and we also have two locums, so we're very confident that once we can get through this phase we're going to be able to provide the services Islanders need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This government has not taken this file seriously at all. Services have been eroded under the people who needed them for years and years. There's been zero leadership in this file for 10 years.

Question again to the Premier: If there was a physical illness or a flu that compromised the quality of life of Islanders, similar to how mental health has impacted Island families, would you consider it a crisis?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Premier MacLauchlan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I said in my response to the leader of the official opposition that this is our number one priority as a government across the whole spectrum of health care and health services in this province, and indeed, we're taking it seriously. We're putting the resources in place; we're putting new initiatives in place.

If I may relate it to my own department, we have the STRENGTH program that's been in operation for two years, a great success. It's diverting people who would otherwise be going to the mainland. We've got the opiate action plan, and we've got the opiate replacement plan. Those are examples.

There are many others, and we're glad to have the opportunity in the course of this session to remind Islanders and remind all the members of this House, that it is a priority to deal with mental health, and we are dealing with it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, three sentences in the Speech From the Throne. I sat here for nearly 40 minutes listening to a speech yesterday, and three sentences, so how is that your number one priority when you're only willing to put three sentences in?

You're becoming a joke. You're becoming a joke to all Prince Edward Island.

Your fast, but when you wanted schools closed, you had no problem fast-tracking that. Nobody had time to do anything, no, you were fast-tracking that so quick.

Why do you continue to stigmatize mental illness on Prince Edward Island by refusing to give mental health the action that it needs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is referring to as the throne speech, but I can tell you that my department, myself as minister and Heather Keizer and Verna Ryan, we presented on the floor of this Legislature to a Standing Committee on Health and Wellness for four hours answering questions and highlighting and outlining our plan –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: – for mental health and services that we provided to Islanders, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Lack of coverage for psychiatric care

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister's right, he was here for four hours. And do you know what? He refused to call it a crisis. He absolutely refused to do that.

Today it's been revealed that the QEH and Hillsborough Hospital have had gaps in psychiatric care; days where there's simply no coverage. It's my understanding that this gap in coverage started September 29th. There was four shifts in October that weren't covered, and there could be eight shifts in November that aren't covered. We've seen this crisis coming for months if not years.

What did you do to plan for this ordeal and this lack of coverage?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Health and Wellness, it's my responsibility to uphold the values of patient safety. In this particular case we do have a few shifts that we aren't able to cover with the psychiatric situation, so we have basically made some decisions to not fill those particular beds. I think it's very important that we reiterate: It's important

that we still have services here to deliver for Islanders who require mental health services and needs, and it is important that we deliver patient safety as the utmost importance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, if patient safety was of the utmost importance, why did we not have a plan in place to deal with these gaps?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Hon. member, we do have a plan in place. In fact, we were here for four hours unfolding some of that plan as we unfold the opportunity to develop a mental health campus in the Hillsborough Hospital. We've got a whole myriad of programs from our behavioral support teams. We have our student wellbeing teams. All of those are developing a plan to service the needs of Islanders, as well as to continue recruiting very hard to fill those vacant positions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now we hear that we're closing beds in Unit 9 to deal with this. We also have people who are presenting to the ER who need psychiatric care.

Minister, how is this not a crisis and what are you doing to deal with this?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important to reiterate to the opposition, as well as other members in the House,

when you define terms and use words like crisis, it can precipitate an opinion by different professionals out there.

If you're trying to recruit psychiatrists and health professionals in Prince Edward Island, calling the situation a crisis doesn't enhance our recruiting efforts. If it's a situation where some Islanders may feel that they're not able to access the particular services that they require in their mental health situation, they may not be able to – we still have two thirds of our capacity here to deliver psychiatry in this province and we'll do our very best to make sure we're seeing the needs of all Islanders, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you who thinks it's a crisis: The province's chief of mental health and addiction services has raised the alarm over emergency rooms. Our new leader has been talking about this for years. Psychiatrists are now going public. We've had patients and frontline workers saying this for years: that they think it's a crisis.

When will you and this government come up with a plan to help things improve?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, indeed we have a plan to help improve the situation and we do see situations where we're going to be able to fill some positions, both with locums and as well with full-time positions coming forward.

I mentioned earlier that we have four positions that people have signed letters of offer. They're working through their papers of immigration and things of that nature and once they're here, I'm sure we'll be able to deliver services in a more timely fashion to what Islanders expect.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me read you a few quotes here – one from the minister: I think ‘crisis’ is a strong word. That’s on October 4th.

May 17th, he disagreed that the system is at crisis levels: I think that’s probably a little elaborate. He said – that was May 17th.

Back in November of 2013, the former minister admits that access is an issue, but there’s no plan to add more psychiatrists right now. Minister, it’s time to stop talking and it’s time to start acting.

How much longer are we going to keep saying that: No, there’s not a crisis – and we’re going to keep downplaying this issue?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Like I said, Mr. Speaker, this is my number one priority as minister. We’re working very hard. We’ve got some very professional staff. I have to give tremendous credit to our recruiting and retention section within our department. They have found physicians, both locums and others. We’re implementing some of the initiatives around tele-psychiatry, some of those initiatives, and, once again, I’ve had the opportunity to talk to many of my colleagues across the country. They are also facing these same challenges.

We’re going to do our very best to compete. I’ve even asked our recruiting/retention division to make sure that they can look at our salary and compensation, to make sure that’s all up to standards, Mr. Speaker.

We are doing everything we possibly can to make sure that we can fill this void.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

Resignations and retirements of psychiatrists

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

There’s been a lot of talk about number one priorities today. The Premier talks of mental health as the number one priority in the health file. The minister himself has talked about: this is a number one priority. The opposition has asked nothing but questions on mental health and it will also be the first question from the Leader of the Third Party.

When asked at a recent standing committee, the four hour committee, the minister has already referred to a couple of times in his answers. Dr. Keizer said this, she said: I don’t want to be indelicate about that – when she was asked about the departure of psychiatrists – I don’t want to be indelicate about that. Those who have exited have exited in response to a performance review.

A question to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness: Can you please clarify what Dr. Keizer meant with those words?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, in regards to the staff that we do have a chance to recruit, if they happen to have a situation where they have foreign credentials, they have to go through the College of Physicians to determine that their credentials are valid and they’re able to provide the level of service that meets the standards in Canada here and on Prince Edward Island. I guess in those particular cases, the situation was they didn’t meet the standards and they weren’t able to get their credentials to be affiliated here for Prince Edward Island on a full-time basis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

At the same meeting, the hon. Leader of the Opposition said this: I can understand that if something happens in a performance review, then maybe that individual isn’t a candidate for retention.

To which Dr. Keizer responded: Correct.

My interpretation of that exchange is that Health PEI actively encouraged the departure of those psychiatrists.

A question to the minister: Were the performance concerns so significant that Health PEI felt the physicians were putting patients at greater risk than having no psychiatrist at all?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that I want to make sure that this House realizes is that it's not my responsibility as minister of health to determine the credentials of an individual. They have to adhere to a college, there's a College of Physicians and Surgeons of Prince Edward Island, and they also have to adhere to the performance reviews by our medical director in charge of psychiatry.

So once again, if the credentials aren't valid or approved by the PEI college of physicians, they have to take the appropriate action at that point.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Dr. Bevan-Baker: My suspicion is that these psychiatrists that who were here, currently working, must have had the credentials that they require to be licensed here on Prince Edward Island, or they wouldn't have been working in the first place.

In this morning's *The Guardian*, Dr. Rob Jay was quoted as saying this: There is nothing that is working properly in this system. We probably need double the number of psychiatrists that we have.

Again, to the minister of health: Could you explain to me Health PEI's rationale for encouraging qualified psychiatrists to resign or retire without having replacements lined up and thus putting patients and medical staff at extraordinary risk?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: I would hope the hon. Leader of the Third Party takes patient safety as a high degree of importance here in this province, Mr. Speaker, and we want to make sure that all the health professionals that are delivering services to Islanders that are delivering it in the standards that are pertaining to the particular profession. In that particular case, it's not my responsibility to determine which is more important.

Either the individual meets the standards, or they do not and it's the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Prince Edward Island that would determine those standards, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Concussions in hockey

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question today is to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Minister, recently hockey hall of famer, the honourable Ken Dryden, was in Charlottetown to discuss the seriousness of concussions in hockey. Although he wrote the book *Game Changer* after the death of NHL player Steve Montador, Ken Dryden genuinely cares about what is happening to young players who get a concussion, what their life is like following this brain injury, and how this brain injury can be prevented.

Minister: Has there been discussion around the ministers responsible for sport table about concussions in amateur sport and what can we do to prevent life-altering brain injuries for young athletes?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Concussions are becoming a very serious issue, especially with competitive sports and combative sports as well.

I was at the national ministers of sport meeting in Winnipeg during the Canada Games and we are talking about trying to make sure that we can put together a national strategy to raise awareness for parents, coaches, and athletes on concussion treatment. I think the key component of our discussion was to make sure that all our provinces are following the similar and comparable protocols when it comes to determining baseline information for concussions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Lewis Point, you first supplementary.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, Ontario is the first province in Canada to adopt legislation called *Rowan's Law Advisory Committee Act* to provide advice to government with respect to head injury prevention and treatment. Other provinces are following Ontario's lead.

Is this something Prince Edward Island will be doing to protect our amateur athletes?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, currently our department is working with a number of our combative sporting organizations in the province and we're really opening up a line of communication to look at the particular subject of making sure that we get the baseline information that may be required so we can determine where concussion protocols should be at.

Right at the moment, we're still waiting for some feedback from some of our national sporting organizations who, once again, those provincial organizations want to be comparable in their standards and views when it comes to such a serious matter, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, when you received the information from your counterparts in sport departments across the country, would your department be hosting a round-table discussion with sport organizations, medical professionals, researchers, athletes, educators, and parents to help ensure we all know more about head injuries and concussions; how we can prevent them; how we can identify them, and what we can do about them?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, as many may or may not be aware that we have developed in 2016 a trauma PEI organization and that organization is working with individuals that have been affected by sports trauma and other head injuries as well.

We're wanting to make sure that they play a role in that. There are discussions already ongoing and I certainly would be open to greater and further discussions around how we deal with this important issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

The Humble Barber liquor license

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Humble Barber has requested to responsibly serve alcohol to customers in his business, similar to how a spa would today. The Humble Barber has locations in Summerside and Charlottetown. Last spring, a comprehensive review was announced to allow the liquor control commission to modernize the act.

Minister: Can you provide the House with an update on the modernization of the act?

Mr. R. Brown: Good question.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to The Humble Barber and wanting to have that license, we have

advised LCC to look into that. In fact, the process started last spring. It's moving along very well. We've gone out and had contact with a number of different organizations that have an interest in this and I expect that this will continue over the next number of months, at which time we'll be looking at any changes that we might be able to make in our legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, your first supplementary.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister: Do you have a timeline on when we will see this modernized act?

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This act really hasn't been looked at thoroughly in a long time and the process is ongoing now. I hope that probably within the next six to nine months that we'll have it completed to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to have their say with respect to it.

As a matter of fact, just recently Restaurants Canada – they travel across Canada and they look at the issuance of licenses – they've given Prince Edward Island a B, second highest in the country with respect to the way our liquor control commissions are run. They've also commented on the fact and recognized that we are looking at legislation to reduce red tape and make it a lot easier for those that are out there in the public (Indistinct)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. Brown: Excellent (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Large-scale irrigation ponds

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the environment minister: What is your policy on large-scale irrigation ponds?

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

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

Over the last number of years, farmers in the agriculture sector have made use of the practice of irrigation holding ponds. They are usually located in the field for collection of natural runoff and snow melt. In some cases, they top them up from some water supply.

Over the last number of months members of my staff and members of the staff from the department of agriculture have worked with farmers with recommendations on how these ponds can be constructed and built, and maintain things that are aren't a problem, such as leaking and evaporation, and I think there are various ponds that are located all across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've been getting a lot of calls from residents concerned about a series of large-scale irrigation ponds being built in my area.

Question to the environment minister: Are you familiar with this development?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, yes we are aware that the holding ponds, irrigation ponds, are all across Prince Edward Island. As I said, we work along with those farmers to help them come up with ways that they can construct them to the most efficient manners. Those are recommendations. They're not regulations

and we work with farmers every day to come up with best practices they can use.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Over the last two years, there have been a series of developments of these irrigation ponds, each one bigger than the last.

Question to the environment minister: What licenses, permits or approvals were required from you, as minister, before these large-scale irrigation ponds were built?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The Minister of Communities, Land and Environment.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Currently, there are no licensing methods that are needed for a holding pond. There are no permitting for the drilling of low-capacity wells.

I would like to mention that when the new Water Act comes into force there will indeed be a need for permitting for wells that may be used to feed these holding ponds, or any other agriculture purpose. It is important –

Mr. Myers: We figured that out. So did everyone else.

Mr. Mitchell: It is important that Islanders know where water withdrawals are occurring, and things of this nature, and of others, will be a very important part of the Water Act moving forward so that we can identify and publicly, and transparently, show Islanders where water is being withdrawn and used all across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Public information meetings re: ponds

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's a lot of confusion about this in the community from residents who feel they're in the dark about what's going on.

Question to the environment minister: Was there any requirement to hold a public information meeting for the community before these ponds were built?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, there is no licensing. There are no regulations. There are no permits that are needed for the holding ponds. There are other practices the farmers use on their own farms and they do not hold public meetings on those as well.

So, as we move forward the Water Act will certainly highlight that permitting is needed. If there is a pond that is going to be fed from a water supply, those levels will be online so that all Islanders can see, and every pond will be noted where they are across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Question to the environment minister: Do you think there should have been a public meeting held to put your cards on the table before these irrigation ponds were built?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Mitchell: As I said, Mr. Speaker, there are all kinds of practices that go on on farms every day, whether it could be clearing land, whether it could be the growing of crops. They don't hold public meetings on things of that nature. There is no mechanism for a public meeting regarding a holding pond.

But as I said, as we move forward with the Water Act, there will be permitting

requirements involved and farmers – we'll be working with them, support them when they need to drill a well of any nature so that what they're going to use for withdrawal levels are recorded and it will become part of the big parcel of how the Water Act will move forward in PEI.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So no approvals were needed and no public information session was held. Now people are seeing industrial irrigation ponds built that are basically man-made lakes powered by dozens of well pumps.

Question to the environment minister: Is there anything in your much-delayed Water Act that would deal with this type of situation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

I will be very pleased when we are able to get the Water Act completed and brought to the floor of the Legislature.

Mr. Fox: It's not completed yet?

Mr. Mitchell: The purpose of the Water Act is to protect the quality and quantity of our water.

As we move forward with this new Water Act; the first time for Prince Edward Island where the policies in place to protect our water, its extraction levels and where it's being used on PEI. Water supplies that are now being used to feed irrigation ponds or holding ponds, will all need to be permitted, and that's for the ones moving forward and the ones that are in existence today. We will have a really good control and handle on where water withdrawals are happening across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To a lot of people in my district it looks like a loophole has been exploited.

Question to the environment minister: Do you think that projects like this are skirting the spirit of what's trying to be accomplished with the Water Act?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

As I said earlier, any wells that are being drilled in the future will need a permit, but those that are in existence will also need a permit. So as far as skirting any of the laws or policies that will be coming forward, that would not be possible. All of those wells will be permitted. We will know where they are. They will be documented. They will be put online for all Islanders to see.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

Wells drilled for irrigation ponds

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the calls I've been getting on this are saying that these irrigation ponds are being powered by as many as 30 wells that are basically going at all times.

Question to the environment minister: Can you confirm how many wells were drilled to power these irrigation ponds in Spring Valley? Is it more or less than 30?

Mr. Trivers: Good question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, unlike the hon. member from across the floor. I do not think members of our farming industry are trying to find loopholes –

Some Hon. Members: Oh! Oh!

Mr. Mitchell: – and ways of skirting what’s going on in Prince Edward Island.

They are very good stewards of the land –

Leader of the Opposition: More or less?

Mr. Mitchell: – they are trying to grow crops. They are trying to run businesses. They want to be part of how water is protected and how we are watching it in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, final question.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Folks in my area are calling these ponds manmade lakes because they’re so big. All the secrecy around this development has some people asking me if this is why the government keeps delaying the Water Act.

Question to the environment minister: Is part of the reason for all the delays in the Water Act to give a chance for some of these farms to get these irrigation ponds before the act comes in?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It certainly – I don’t buy into this sinister plan that the hon. member brings from across the floor. The Water Act is a significant piece of legislation of Prince Edward Island –

Mr. Fox: How many wells per pond?

Mr. Mitchell: It’s a piece of legislation that has been asked for by Islanders for a number of years now.

We are taking our due time and due diligence to do this thing right. As we brought our recommendations across PEI for the second round of consultations, we were brought new ideas; new methods from the first round that we wanted to incorporate. We wanted to take our time, fully, and we wanted to have the very best legislation we can have.

When we do have that and it’s all in place we will bring it to the floor of the Legislature. Hopefully, that will be in the very near future, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

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

Ms. Biggar: Oh, here we go.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

New Teachers and Supports

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

It’s my pleasure to rise to give this, my first statement, and I think it’s one we’ll all be happy to receive.

It’s my great pleasure to rise today for an announcement that will have great benefits for our teachers and students in this province. A new annualized investment of \$2.8 million to hire a total –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. Brown: – of 41 new classroom teachers and support educators will help all students –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. Brown: – become successful learners.

An Hon. Member: We’re listening.

Mr. MacEwen: Still 50 short. Five hundred.

Mr. J. Brown: That's 41 new classroom teachers and support educators will help all students become successful learners.

This is in addition to the 27 teachers announced last spring –

Mr. Trivers: Oh!

Mr. J. Brown: – and the 15 EA positions hired last school year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. Brown: These new positions will address classroom composition; meet the growing needs of English as an Additional Language students and free-up teachers and resources to help all students succeed.

Our population growth strategy is showing very positive results. We are seeing many young families moving to our province and more students enrolling in our schools.

For example, in the past decade, the number of newcomer students in Island schools rose from 367 to 1,882. This is a significant investment that will help all students and teachers.

Hiring educators to work with newcomer students means existing teachers will have more time to focus on the needs of all students. The new positions will address immediate needs and support the arrival of students throughout the remainder of the school year with minimal disruption.

The new positions will be targeted in Charlottetown and Stratford schools to reflect the growth experience by these communities.

Mr. R. Brown: (Indistinct)

Leader of the Opposition: Where are you going to put them in Stratford?

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) students (Indistinct)

Mr. J. Brown: The new positions include 10 classroom composition teachers, eight EAL mobile teacher positions, 20 EAL education assistant positions, and three EAL mobile youth service worker positions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. Brown: This investment will also support new materials and technology and additional professional learning for teachers.

I would like to acknowledge our partners in the Department of Economic Development and Tourism who have provided this funding.

I will be leaving the House shortly to share the details of this investment with our education partners, and I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: What a great start.

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

Mr. Myers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This government has long struggled with the education file. They've bounced ministers into this role and out of this role and –

Mr. LaVie: Fired them.

Mr. Myers: – right out of government completely, they –

Mr. LaVie: Fired them.

Mr. Myers: – they decided to go home because they were so frustrated with the way that the Premier meddled into the file.

While it's hard to complain about a \$2.8 million investment in the teachers, this is the government that cut 100 teachers already. You're not back up to where you started cutting when you were cutting teachers, and you're talking about, you know, you're going to put an immediate investment back into Stratford. There's not a room for a teacher. Where are you going to put them? There's kids in the hallways learning now. There is no room in the Stratford school for students, let alone more teachers.

Your guys' priorities are way off when it comes to how you're going to allocate and what are you doing about the class size? This doesn't address the overall class size.

You have 20 EAL teachers; well that's great in Charlottetown where there are many

newcomer families, and I think that's a fantastic thing for the Charlottetown area.

There's lots of other needs in the education system besides what's happening in Charlottetown. Unfortunate that the minister from Brighton over there doesn't – can't see outside of Charlottetown. He talks a big game in Charlottetown. It might work on the backstreets of Brighton, but it certainly doesn't work in Georgetown where we get nothing from this guy or from this government ever.

An Hon. Member: Thirty million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The Leader of the Third Party.

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

The new minister said he expected that we'd be all happy to receive this news. Apparently that's not entirely true.

However, I have to say how happy I am to hear this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dr. Bevan-Baker: We need to do something about the ratios in our schools. This will help. It's a small step; I grab that. But, we have to give credit where credit is due. I thank you for that.

Teachers do so much these days. They're not just educators. They're counselors, they are bank machines, they are nurses – I mean they cover so many things, and the stresses of that job are quite extraordinary, and anything we can do to help not only, of course, the children in our classes, which this will do, but also the teachers, is an enormously important step.

I would love to see you go further, though, minister, and I think there needs to be an emphasis on the early years here on interventions before children develop problems that make it very difficult for them to recover in later life. That's the Finnish model. They put huge amounts of resources to identify learning disabilities and mental health stresses early on.

Again, I thank you for this, but there's so much more that needs to be done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Investments in our National Highway System and Collector Roads

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

Ms. Biggar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise today in the House to announce federal-provincial funding of over \$1.3 million for maintenance and capital projects on our National Highway System and collector roads throughout the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Great.

Ms. Biggar: Work will take place in ten communities across the Island and include the repaving and shoulder construction of over 9,586 metres of roadway.

Road maintenance is essential to increase the life of our existing road structures and reduce overall costs. Economically maintaining the roadways can decrease long term costs by reducing the severity of roadway distortion over time.

Road maintenance work will take place on Route 16 in Basin Head, Main Street and Cape Bear Road in Murray Harbour, 48 Road in Mount Albion, Rustico Road in Milton Station, Ferry Road in Cornwall and Route 19 in New Dominion.

Additional funding also provides for improvements to Route 2 in Marshfield –

Mr. Myers: They're all getting 0.5 kilometres, by the sound of it.

Ms. Biggar: – as well as Route 124 in Abrams Village.

Mr. Myers: Or 500 metres, as it were.

Ms. Biggar: Through continued investments in our provincial roadway system, the Governments of Canada and Prince Edward

Island are supporting the long term development of our Island communities.

This investment will help create modern, safer and more efficient transportation corridors that will allow Prince Edward Island to grow and thrive.

Their rehabilitation will also provide numerous job opportunities and help benefit our local economy.

We are keeping travelers safe, assisting our traditional industries to get their products to market and enable economic and community growth.

The Government of Canada is providing \$595,500 through the New Building Canada Fund. The remainder is being supported through my department's five-year Highway Improvement Plan.

Prince Edward Island plays a critical role, and we played a critical role in persuading the federal government to adjust New Building Canada Fund for criteria for roads and bridges.

In 2016, this resulted in the federal government lowering the traffic threshold from 10,000 vehicles per day to 1,000 vehicles, which has enabled our province to access funding for an additional 400 kilometres of strategic Island roads that were not eligible previously.

We have been successful in securing dollars through the New Building Canada Fund for several highway projects over the last few years, including the Souris bridge replacement, Cascumpec Bridge replacement, all phases of the Trans-Canada Highway extension and various road and bridge projects throughout the province on our National Highway System and strategic road network.

These projects have totaled over \$100 million in cost-shared funding.

An Hon. Member: Wow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Biggar: The Province of Prince Edward Island does appreciate the support of the federal government. Working together to

build and improve infrastructure achieves local and regional priorities while supporting national objectives.

Since 2015, our collective development of infrastructure across Prince Edward Island has been unparalleled, with more than \$300 million invested in provincial and federal projects.

The Province of Prince Edward Island will continue to be strategic in its infrastructure investments, choosing projects that will help support and maintain the fact that Prince Edward Island is leading the economy in Canada.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Actually, I don't know where to start, because this has to be the worst minister of transportation we've ever seen in the province.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fox: I actually hear that. And I actually can't believe she stood up today and bragged about \$1.3 million in new funding from the federal government which equates to nine kilometres.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. Fox: I think the minister needs to get out of the office and go into rural PEI and see what the roads area actually like across the Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: Take a drive out to the country.

Mr. Fox: And Mr. Speaker –

Mr. R. Brown: She's on the roads all the time.

Mr. Fox: We have the Island Coastal fund –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. Fox: – but you know we also have a new fund, and it's called the Gillis Heavy Equipment fund, care of the minister of transportation.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trivers: There we go.

Mr. Fox: Now let's talk about the Cornwall bypass. The minister's going to spend \$65 million of money that was never planned for before on Cornwall, to bypass that, when our roads in rural PEI are falling apart. If you ever go through Emerald or Hunter River or go down to Georgetown or Souris –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct).

Mr. Fox: – you can't believe it.

You need, minister, to get out of the office and get into rural PEI, because I'm hearing it across the Island.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: Trout River Road. Go down Trout River Road.

An Hon. Member: District 2.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, what we need here in this province and this minister has failed to recognize is, is we need a rural highway plan or infrastructure summit going forward, because under this minister it's falling apart.

Mr. R. Brown: No.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roach: He needs to get out (Indistinct) Georgetown (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: We need a plan.

Mr. Fox: You know, one thing I saw, Mr. Speaker, this summer, I couldn't actually believe it, is over the past number of years I've heard from this minister say that: if you're going to do recap in the districts, make sure it's 0.5-, 0.75- plus; nothing less.

You know what this minister did this summer? They did multiple paving all across the Island of sections of one to 300 metres band-aid solutions.

Mr. Trivers: Wow.

Mr. LaVie: Shame!

Mr. Fox: I'm asking this minister –

Mr. LaVie: That's a shame.

Mr. Fox: – look at a rural action plan to do with our highway system and our infrastructure system because it's plain to see that you're out of touch with what's actually happening rural PEI –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – with our infrastructure.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It's important to note that the funding the minister just announced is about 5% of what it is going to cost to build the Cornwall bypass.

Mr. MacEwen: Hear! Hear!

Dr. Bevan-Baker: That clearly demonstrates where this government's priorities are in terms of infrastructure.

Many of us live in rural districts. Many of us are acutely aware of the problems that are there. I'm pleased to hear that part of Highway 19 in my district is going to be fixed up. I don't know how many inches or metres –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) fixed up.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I'm grateful for that because clearly a well-integrated infrastructure is incredibly important not only for the goods, for the movement of people, but for our economy and particularly in our rural areas –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) plan (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: We have come a long way since the days when a trip in a horse and buggy to Charlottetown was an epic trip for somebody in District 17. It's time that we did have a modern integrated transportation system all across this Island.

On that note, New Brunswick, just put in, with the help of federal funds, and I can't think of the dollar figure right now, but a series of level 3 electric chargers all along the Trans-Canada Highway in New Brunswick. If you're driving an electric vehicle through New Brunswick, you can be sure that you can stop many places across that province and get – here on Prince Edward Island we do not have one level 3 electric charger –

Mr. LaVie: No.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – it's about time that when we –

Mr. LaVie: No.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: – talk about infrastructure, we're not just talking about repaving our roads, but we're looking to the future and that we are creating the infrastructure that is going to be required for transportation needs of the future, which is an electrified transportation system.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

World Diabetes Day

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, November 14th, was World Diabetes Day. There are more than 14,000 Islanders living with diabetes.

Today, I am pleased, to not only recognize the significant impact that this disease has on Islanders, but also announce that we are investing an additional \$160,000 to increase supports to Islanders living with diabetes.

An Hon. Member: Great.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: This new investment will permanently fund a full-time nurse practitioner for the Provincial Diabetes Program, as well as to increase diabetes test strip coverage for Island women who require more intensive diabetes management during pregnancy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: The rate of gestational diabetes on PEI has increased by 90% over the past three years. This added support will help to ensure a healthy outcome for both mother and baby during and post-pregnancy.

Ms. Biggar: Great.

Mr. Henderson: We have also seen an increase in diabetes patients with complex needs. The new permanent nurse practitioner will improve access to care and management of diabetes.

With the indulgence of the Speaker, I would like to recognize a couple of people in our gallery today; Martha St. Pierre, Provincial Diabetes Program clinical leader, and Marilyn Barrett, Director of Primary Care Networks and Chronic Disease.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: These two ladies do outstanding jobs directing and managing our Provincial Diabetes Program.

The Provincial Diabetes Program provides leadership, expertise through education supports to clients since our diabetes strategy was released in 2014. Approximately, 6,900 Islanders have accessed this program.

We also partner with Island optometrists to provide diabetes retinopathy testing. Over the past two years approximately 7,500 Islanders have gone through this testing.

I know, Mr. Speaker, this is an important subject to you, but early assessment intervention for maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. Throughout the month of November, and various other times throughout the year, Health PEI is offering

free diabetes screening and risk assessment clinics across the province.

I encourage Islanders to visit these clinics so that they better understand the risk factors associated with diabetes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Responding to the minister's statement, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

Mr. MacEwen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to both Martha and Marilyn for being here today and for your hard work, of course, with diabetes and with the government.

Recently, our new leader had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Diabetes Canada, and to hear their views and their concerns. They do excellent work, of course, advocating for Islanders who are affected by this disease.

Our caucus was proud to help effect change upon this government in assisting creating public pressure for the creation, of course, of the insulin pump program.

I know the three-year provincial diabetes strategy runs out in 2017. We expect that the minister is going to be bringing forward this next stage of the strategy.

Government must address why programming, such as insulin pumps, are under prescribed and are failing to reach many new Islanders. Also, we've got the constant issue of the allotment of diabetic strips. As a province, we are still lacking a diabetes registry. I know work is underway towards that.

Lastly, we have grave concerns about the recent federal Liberal government cuts to tax credits for diabetics, are proposed. These cuts are retroactive and based on a new interpretation of existing policy.

I'll be asking this minister and the government to work with us and to listen to Islanders and state their opposition to these changes.

I'd really like to make mention – to take this opportunity to make mention of a grade 1 student in Morell, Maxwell MacFarlane, who is a youth ambassador for Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Again, he's in grade 1, goes to Morell. This fella, he went, on top of all the public fundraising he did, he went class to class in Morell Consolidated explaining to everybody about diabetes and about his own type 1 condition.

I just wanted to say great job. He raised over \$400 just on his own within the school. Great job raising that money and creating awareness so that we keep pushing government to do more on this file, so I would like to give kudos to Maxwell.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Also responding to the minister's statement will be the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Thank you for the statement, minister, and welcome Martha and Marilyn, nice to see you here in the House.

There are so many health care problems for which we have to be reactive. Any number of them, but there are also health care problems where, if we were to emphasize the prevention aspect we could do a lot, not only to alleviate suffering of individuals, but to save this provinces millions and millions of dollars.

Type 2 diabetes falls solidly in that category. We know that a healthy lifestyle that involves keeping your weight healthy, eating healthy, exercising, not smoking. All of these things are critical elements that, while we will never be able to eradicate diabetes, of course, it could have a significant impact on reducing the prevalence of it here on Prince Edward Island. Again, huge health care savings.

While our own health is largely our own responsibility, there are things that government can do here. Tax incentives for people; why don't we make gym memberships tax free? Why don't we further tax cigarettes? Dr. Ian Reid was here

presenting to a standing committee just a few weeks ago, talking about how Prince Edward Island is below the rest of the provinces when it comes to taxing cigarettes, and how that is a drain on the – despite the fact we get millions of dollars from taxes off cigarettes, the costs associated with smoking actually outweigh that. There are things government could do.

Again, I want to thank you for your work. I hope that government responds with some more proactive preventative measures to make sure that diabetes does not continue on the escalation that it has for so long now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

Tabling of Documents

Speaker: The Clerk.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, please be advised that pursuant to Rule 80 (k) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island, there were 28 command documents and a number of responses to written questions received by the Office of the Clerk and tabled intersessionally since the House last met on May 12th, 2017.

This report is a full listing of these intersessionally tabled documents and the listing will be reproduced in the Journal of the Legislative Assembly in full.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

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

Ms. Mundy: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Child Protection Act*, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Government House Leader, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Child Protection Act*, Bill No. 3, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. minister, will you give us a brief explanation of what this bill is about?

Ms. Mundy: Thank you, I certainly will Mr. Speaker.

This amendment will allow for the introduction of reliable and relevant hearsay evidence in child protection legal proceedings. Amending the act will also reduce utilization of court time, and expedite timelines for court decisions in the best interest of children, to either transition back to parents or move forward to permanent residency (Indistinct) permanency plans.

This amendment will bring Prince Edward Island in line with most other Canadian provinces and territories' legislation.

An Hon. Member: Good.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Health Services Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Health Services Act*, Bill No. 6, read a first time.

Speaker: An explanation please, hon. minister.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, today we are introducing *An Act to Amend the Health Services Act*. The Health PEI Board works on behalf of all Islanders to provide high-level oversight of Health PEI as they strive to deliver safe and quality health care.

This amendment will help ensure that various Islanders have an opportunity to sit on the board, and that all of the directors are engaged in the work of the board. The amendment seeks to update provisions respecting the appointment and terms of office for the Health PEI Board of Directors, and the changes include limiting a term

office to a maximum of three years, limiting the number of consecutive terms to two, and establishing the circumstance in which the minister may revoke the appointment of a director.

This amendment is consistent with the provisions put forward in the recent legislation such as the *Regulated Health Professions Act* and the *Health Services Act* for Community Engagement and Committee Regulations.

Speaker: Thank you, minister.

An Hon. Member: Great job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Repeal the Registered Nurses Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Repeal the Registered Nurses Act*, Bill No. 10, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. minister, could you give us an explanation of the bill?

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, today we introduce *An Act to Repeal the Registered Nurses Act*, and the registered nurses are transitioning to regulations under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, and the repeal of the *Registered Nurses Act* is necessary to be part of that process.

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Henderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a bill to be intituled *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act* and I move, seconded by the Honourable Premier, that the same be now received and read a first time.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk: *An Act to Amend the Regulated Health Professions Act*, Bill No. 11, read a first time.

Speaker: Hon. minister, an explanation of this bill.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, this amendment is mostly administrative in nature. It clarifies a number of elements in the act, which include: Allowing for a deputy register, requirements for different classes of registrants, factors to consider when imposing fines, and additional regulating-making powers.

The college of pharmacists is currently the only body which the act applies, and they have been consulted and supportive of this amendment.

Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Government Motions

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

Clerk Assistant (R. Reddin): Order No. 1, Consideration of the Speech of Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, at the opening of the present session.

Speaker: I will now call on the mover, the hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park and the Government House Leader.

Mr. R. Brown: I've got to get the podium (Indistinct)

Mr. MacEwen: Don't you have your own?

Mr. R. Brown: Yeah, I do, but I've got so much I've got to talk about today, I need the big podium.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to respond to the throne speech.

First, I want to say a few words about my colleague, Doug Currie. He was an excellent minister in many portfolios in the

government, and he worked extremely hard in those portfolios, but most of all he worked extremely hard for his constituents in his district. That's why numerous times on elections he would get a high voter turnout and a high vote. He was a good representative for the people, and he was a good minister for the Province of Prince Edward Island. My congratulations go out to the minister – or the former minister, and I wish him well in his future endeavours.

I'm pleased to rise to move this Speech from the Throne. This speech reflects two-and-a-half years of investments in improving the lives of Islanders; investments in health care, education, economic development, and community development. We are seeing results.

Our economy has seen continuous growth; unprecedented growth. We're leading the country in most of the indicators. We are the envy of most of Canada, because most of Canada is looking at us and seeing: how are they doing it. How is such a small province doing such a tremendous job in growing its middle class, in growing its economy?

We're doing that by instilling confidence in people; confidence that people can do things, can strive. The negative comments that have come out for many years about Islanders is being reversed. We know that it is important that our Islanders have confidence, not only in themselves, but in the economy.

And to talk about the economy, economists – some politicians, as in the United States, thinks that the 1% drives the economy; the super-rich, or the rich are the ones that drive the economy.

That is totally wrong; what drives the economy is spending. As the Premier has said many times, it's the flow of money. It's the flow of purchasing and producing goods that drives the economy and that makes an economy.

The Great Depression was a result of credit and the inability to get credit, and that's what drove it, and the confidence put in the people of the day. That's what drove the Great Depression. And that's why we're seeing great confidence in our economy today, because people are seeing – have

access to credit. They have access to a government that's willing to assist in growing the economy, because we know a growing economy is great for all Islanders.

Exports have reached an all-time high of one billion 320 million in 2016. As the Premier indicated when he was running in his first election – in his election, it's important for us to close the gap between our imports and exports.

We see right now a tremendous amount of negotiations going on throughout the world: The TPP, CETA, the free-trade agreement between Canada and the US, and Mexico and NAFTA, and it's all about each and every country is recognizing the importance of balance of trade. If you're importing more than you're exporting there is concern, and that's why this Premier has focused on growing the exports market.

That has instilled confidence in the manufacturing community on Prince Edward Island. He instilled it in many companies, and I've known of a lot of companies that have expanded, because they know that this Premier is listening to their concerns. They know that this Premier has confidence in the small businesses of Prince Edward Island. They know small business on Prince Edward Island knows that this Premier has their back and this Premier knows how good their employees are and their companies are.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: That brings me – it's a thing if we think about it. If we're being negative all the time to small businesses and telling them they can't do what they can do, that just sends a ripple through the whole economy. If the government does not have confidence in the people, how come the people can't have confidence in themselves? It's important that we continue to celebrate our private sector here on Prince Edward Island and to grow our economy through exports. It's important because what that does, growing our exports, is grow our workforce. We've seen over the last year, 2500 jobs created here on Prince Edward Island because of that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: When people have money, Mr. Speaker, they spend. That's one good thing about our economy: When you focus on the middle class instead of the rich. The rich puts their money in offshore accounts. The middle class will spend their money and that's why our retail sales here on Prince Edward Island are growing. That's why when people have money they will spend.

Take the fishing industry – the member from Souris is a fisherman – he knows when fishermen are doing good, the car dealerships are doing good. When fishermen are doing good, retailers are doing good because the fishermen –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: I'm giving credit the fishermen of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: They do a great job in going and catching the product in cooperation with the government. We do a great job in getting them the best price they can and –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: What? Do you have a point of order?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Okay.

Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure this year to see that the fishermen are doing good in Prince Edward Island and one of the main reasons prices are up, I think, was the efforts of the government in finding exports. When you have competition, you have increased prices – a little, basic fact of economics. You created demand, you increase the price. I think this government, through its marketing, through the PEI Fishermen's Association, through Royal Star and our fish processing companies throughout Prince Edward Island have created tremendous demand for our product. After all, it is the best product in the world and it is recognized as the best product in the world.

Also, when people have money, they spend money. What do they do with that money? Building permits have increased 28.9%,

outpacing the national average of 9.8.; phenomenal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: You know what? That does when people have money and they have money to spend? They can better their lives. It is a better life here on Prince Edward Island when there is money to spend. It's proud. I stand here today proud of it because when people are building, they're building for the future, they're building to build a family and that's what we need on Prince Edward Island.

Our young people on Prince Edward Island have confidence. That's why they're out building new houses. That's why they're out thinking about having a bigger family because this government has provided the confidence and the back that they're willing to take that investment.

Building permits are up, what does it do? It creates work for the trades here on Prince Edward Island. See? There's a theme – there's a theme here. If there's money flowing through the economy, the economy is growing. People continue now building houses to start having confidence in themselves and that confidence builds more confidence and the economy gets better and better.

But, it's great to see these new houses going up and the new apartments going up. I know in my own district, a number of new facilities are being built that is housing many, many newcomers to Prince Edward Island. That, again, creates confidence in our economy which allows people to go out and spend their money. If you don't have confidence, you hide your money in accounts and that and the economy doesn't grow. That ripples the other way.

I think over the last few years we've seen tremendous growth because we have shown to the people of Prince Edward Island that we have confidence in them as families, employers, employees. You just look next door here at the renovations being done the legislative building; the workers that are on that site. You have all kinds of trades working on that site. It's phenomenal to see people working. It's great to see people

working because it makes for a great economy.

Sometimes government has to intervene to make sure that there's fairness in the economy. One way the government gets involved is through the minimum wage. As we've seen, we've increased the minimum wage – going up to \$11.55 an hour in April, 2018. That, again, shows confidence in the people, shows confidence that we're willing to set the minimum wage for them. Okay?

Now I know there have been recent comments in the paper by the chamber of commerce, that they want the minimum wage pegged to the consumer price index. I must disagree with the chamber of commerce on that. Why I disagree is when the economy is doing good, profits are doing good, and the companies are making money –

Mr. LaVie: Government steps in (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – they owe it to their employees to share those benefits with them.

Our economy is booming and we have lower corporate income tax, helping the corporations. We've allowed corporations to go out and we've assisted corporations to make more money and that's good. Again: Generating money, which generates the economy, which benefits everyone. We're not hiding that money and we're not regressing into a state of waiting for better times. We don't have to wait for better times, better times are here for all Islanders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: And why I disagree with the chamber of commerce? And I know the Premier got some flack over this, and you know what? I commend him for standing up for workers on Prince Edward Island. I commend him for taking their side because a lot of years under the Tory administration, their side wasn't taken. Now we Islanders know that we're on their side.

I've got to commend the CBC, Kevin Yarr, he does a great job for researching issues of the day here on Prince Edward Island. He had a press release in February 23rd, 2017 where he analyzed the effects of the request

of the chamber of commerce. At that time, according to his chart, he said: if we were at the consumer price index increases to minimum wage only, the workers on Prince Edward Island would be at \$11.41. No, sorry – \$8.41 – they would be at \$8.41 instead of \$11.00, and \$11.55 now.

I am proud. I'm extremely proud to be a Liberal because Liberal philosophy is that only a few do not get all the benefits of a good economy. Everyone has to participate in an economy. If the economy is doing good – if anyone is left behind, then the economy is not doing good because we grown an economy to help everybody. That's why I support it, starting in – and if you look at his chart from 1985, we were pretty consistent with going along with the CPI index.

The 10 long, miserable years of the Tory administration from 1996 on kept to the CPI index. Along comes a new government and we said: Islanders should be doing better. Minimum should be doing better. So the chart goes from \$8.41 and it shows on the chart right now the spread between consumer price index and the minimum wage. We've outpaced the consumer price index since 19 – since 2007.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct) birthday.

Mr. R. Brown: No, no. It's here, he did a good job on it; 2017. And we were criticized for it. We were told we're going to lose jobs. If you do this we're going to lose jobs. People are going have no jobs. We're going to have no choice; we're –

Mr. Fox: Unemployment rate –

Mr. R. Brown: – going to have to lay people off–

Mr. Fox: – is 14%.

Mr. R. Brown: What?

Mr. Fox: Unemployment rate is 14% in rural PEI.

Mr. R. Brown: We'll get on that.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We were –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – told Islanders would lose jobs. What's happened? The employment on Prince Edward Island has grown. As I said earlier, since last year 2,500 jobs have been created on Prince Edward Island. That's the reverse of what we were being told. We were told if you raise minimum wage higher than consumer price index, you would lose jobs.

Now, if you were a Tory you'd listen to that and you'd say: oh my God, my friends in big business don't want to pay their employees a fair wage. We will stick to the consumer price index.

That's where we see a difference between Liberals and Conservatives. Liberals, they know that's wrong, whereas Tories would say: no, that's right.

Mr. LaVie: What's the Greens say?

Mr. R. Brown: We should hold –

Mr. LaVie: What's the Greens say (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – them down. Oh no way –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – he'll have his chance –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – and I'm waiting for him – I'm waiting to hear it –

Ms. Biggar: We want to hear (Indistinct)

Dr. Bevan-Baker: We are all (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – not –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) on PEI (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: No, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to give you a little history here of minimum wage here on Prince Edward Island. The first act was made in 25th of March, 1959. It was called the Women's Minimum Wage Act.

Ms. Biggar: All right.

Mr. R. Brown: And an act respecting the wage for men received assent on the 13th of April –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) they got more.

Mr. R. Brown: – 1960. I bring that out today because it just shows that we're evolving to have two –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) minimum –

Mr. R. Brown: – different –

Ms. Biggar: – wages.

Mr. R. Brown: – wages in the 50s. We are equals. We are all equals in this economy. It shows the efforts that were made over the years in minimum wage. The good times of minimum wage were usually during Liberal times.

Liberal times are good times. I've always said it –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: Liberal times are good times.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: Tory times are tough times.

Ms. Biggar: Oh! There you go.

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Tory times are tough times. I've gone through a couple of decades where you compare the Tory times to the Liberal times –

Mr. LaVie: It shows.

Mr. R. Brown: – and there's lucky. There's lucky –

Ms. Biggar: You've been around. You know.

Mr. R. Brown: – there's lucky the Liberal administrations –

Mr. LaVie: You've been fired a couple of times.

Mr. R. Brown: The Liberal administrations came along to fix a lot of the problems that were made during the terrible Tory times.

Ms. Biggar: Oh, there you go. Fired at what—

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: — 800 people? How many people did they fire?

Mr. R. Brown: And that was a dark day —

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) don't know (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: — in provincial politics here on Prince Edward Island. It was the day that 800 people were sent home for no cause other than to be seeing at an event.

You know what that happened? If you look at the economy at the time, firing 800 people —

Mr. LaVie: What's that?

Mr. R. Brown: — it reduced confidence in the economy.

Ms. Biggar: It did.

Mr. R. Brown: It reduced people's confidence. Everybody looked around and said: my, we better brace for this because Tory times are tough times and we better put our money away because by the end of their administration there'll be nothing left.

They were almost right because —

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: — when we came in power in 2007 she was pretty dismal times. And we're working extremely hard. It took a while to get her turned around, get the ship turned around, but it's turning around.

Mr. LaVie: Closing schools (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: And you know what? That ship today is going, I'd say, it's at full tilt —

Mr. LaVie: You closed the schools (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: — the engines are —

Ms. Biggar: Full speed ahead.

Mr. R. Brown: — revving —

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: — the economy is revving —

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: — it's like opening day lobster season, all the boats are rushing out. That's what the Island economy is going on right now. The metaphor right now is: the economy is going like opening day on lobster season.

Every company on —

Mr. Roach: We're on a tear.

Ms. Biggar: On a tear. It's on a tear.

Mr. R. Brown: The only —

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: And you know what's the good part about it? Companies are going full tilt. So what do they have to do? Buy —

Ms. Compton: (Indistinct) are going to make (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: — bigger engines. Buy bigger engines. That's what's happening now through our government. Our government, through the investment tax credit, through labour rebates for the companies on Prince Edward Island —

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: — allow them — yes, and I'll get on to that, and allow them to grow. You're growing —

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: — you're investing money. You're again, putting money into the economy, which in turn is being spent, which in turn is making people's lives better.

Full employment has averaged 83.9% higher than the national average. Every time I look at a Statistics Canada report nowadays, Prince Edward Island is at the top –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roach: At the lead.

Mr. R. Brown: We're at the top.

Mr. Roach: Top of the (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We're at the top.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: You can't –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) on top.

Mr. R. Brown: – you can't see a report –

Mr. LaVie: You got it all wrong at the top.

Mr. R. Brown: – Stats Canada people are up there saying: what is going on there in Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) report (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: What is going on in Prince Edward Island? How are they doing it? How are they beating every target –

Mr. Trivers: Except for the lowest wage.

Mr. R. Brown: – in Canada? How are they doing it?

Mr. LaVie: We're always on top (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We're being looked at –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: What?

Ms. Biggar: It's all good (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Oh, I'm ignoring them.

Mr. LaVie: What? We're always on top.

Mr. R. Brown: You know as, in other provinces, Bay Street, maybe where the government looks, but we look on Main Street –

Mr. Roach: Yes sir.

Mr. R. Brown: We look at people that are working on Main Street –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roach: Right here on PEI.

Mr. R. Brown: That's our – Bay Street's not our focus. Main Street, Souris; Main Street, Montague –

Ms. Compton: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Main Street, Summerside; Main Street, Alberton –

Ms. Biggar: Got some darn good pavement on –

Mr. R. Brown: – that's where our –

Ms. Biggar: – those Main Streets –

Mr. R. Brown: – priorities are –

Ms. Biggar: – too.

Mr. R. Brown: Our priority is with the workers on Main Street. On the 48 Road, that may not be a Main Street, but it's a main thoroughfare, I guess –

Mr. Trivers: Got to move to the city (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – Mr. Speaker –

Mr. Roach: Don't forget O'Leary.

Mr. R. Brown: O'Leary. Oh! O'Leary: Hockeyville.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: Seven Mile Road.

Mr. R. Brown: Liberals are on Main Street, Tories are on Bay Street –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – you'll hear that all through the country. That's the problem here.

Mr. Trivers: Only two Main Streets in your plan: one in Charlottetown, one in Summerside.

Mr. R. Brown: Our traditional industries, we ought to be really proud of our –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – traditional industries –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) Prince Edward Island –

Mr. R. Brown: – agriculture and –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – fisheries. Agriculture and fisheries are doing phenomenal –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – because they have the backing of the government –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – they know –

Mr. Myers: Because they caught a lot of fish.

Mr. R. Brown: – they know – no, but they caught a lot of fish, but we created a demand for those fish

Ms. Biggar: Some fish (Indistinct)

Some Hon. Members: Oh! Oh!

Mr. R. Brown: We've created a demand –

Some Hon. Members: Oh! Oh!

Ms. Biggar: After they shut them down.

Mr. R. Brown: – a phenomenal demand –

Ms. Biggar: After they shut the fish –

Mr. R. Brown: – for that fish –

Ms. Biggar: – plants down.

Mr. R. Brown: – you know –

An Hon. Member: Ronnie would have made (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – I saw the confidence of the fisherman drained out of them –

Mr. Myers: When Ronnie MacKinley was minister.

Mr. R. Brown: No. No, the day that Pat Binns had his news conference down at the CP hotel where he shut down all the plants on Prince Edward Island –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) the last one down (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – that's when the confidence –

Mr. Roach: And look how well it's doing now.

Mr. R. Brown: – the confidence of the –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – community –

Mr. Roach: (Indistinct) the community.

Mr. R. Brown: The confidence of the fishermen was devastated on that day. But you know what? Our fishing industry is back –

Ms. Biggar: Yeah.

Mr. R. Brown: – I agree, catches are up, but prices are up. The Member from Souris-Elmira was always arguing: get the price up. Get the price up, we got the price up. You should be happy. And I hope you're spending all your profits –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) MacKinley –

Mr. R. Brown: What?

Mr. LaVie: – the price went down –

Mr. R. Brown: And –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – we got them up, and it's going great.

Again, our fishing industry is doing good. What does that do? Our fish plants are doing good. If our fish plants are doing good; they're hiring people. What's that doing? Again, putting money into the economy, it's putting confidence into the economy –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct) rural PEI.

Mr. R. Brown: – people are going home from work at the fish plants saying: you know, I can now invest in my house, which grows the permits on Prince Edward Island –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) can't work (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – I can now –

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct) find good work.

Mr. R. Brown: – go buy a better vehicle. You just look at the car sales over the last couple of years. I think we're almost up to \$400 million in car sales –

Ms. Biggar: Trucks.

Mr. R. Brown: – and I commend the fishing industry. One thing about them; when they got cash, the fishermen, they spend her and that's good for the economy –

Mr. LaVie: Even if they don't.

Mr. R. Brown: – and I want to thank each and fisherman for that.

You know, one of the biggest things that instilled confidence in them, was when fishermen were having problems a few years ago when we came into power. There was a dark day there.

An Hon. Member: What are you talking about (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: A dark day. One of the things –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct) they shine up their boats?

Mr. R. Brown: A dark day because they were having issues of making their payments. What did a good Liberal administration do? What did a great Liberal administration do?

Mr. LaVie: You took the crab licenses.

Mr. R. Brown: Said: look it –

Mr. LaVie: You took the crab licenses from them.

Mr. R. Brown: – we got your back. We're going to give you –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – low-interest loans –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – we're going to give you low-interest loans to see you through these tough times –

Mr. LaVie: Keep coming.

Mr. R. Brown: – and that's good, because that's what Liberals are about. We see an industry having a tough time, we're there to help them, and we'll always be there to help them. Again, when industry sees us helping them, low-interest loans, to help the fishing industry that again says: Well, you know what? Them tough Tory times are over. Them Liberal good times are here. Maybe I'll get back –

Mr. Myers: Into Cabinet?

Mr. R. Brown: No.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: No.

That's what fishermen have said, and that's why things are great.

Now let's go to the agriculture industry. Things are booming in the agriculture industry too. I've always been told – or 'Spy' Ready, the former mayor of the City of Charlottetown, he used to say to us all the time at city council: If rural PEI is doing good, urban PEI is doing good. And you

know what? That's right: If rural PEI is doing good, urban PEI is doing good.

Ms. Compton: Somebody told you that?

Mr. R. Brown: Again – yeah. See, I listen to my mentors –

Mr. LaVie: No you don't.

Mr. R. Brown: – because they had the experience and the rough times.

Mr. Myers: Ronnie MacKinley, Robert Ghiz.

Mr. R. Brown: You know, and I knew that “Spy” Ready lived through hard times; through Tory times, he said.

But it's important to keep the economy going, and this government is keeping the economy going. There's no better feeling than to see people working that we – they're investing again in their families. That's great. There's no better feeling than seeing the economy going at full-tilt and seeing everybody working.

I commend, as I commended the fishermen of Prince Edward Island, I commend each and every farmer on Prince Edward Island –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct).

Ms. Biggar: You know they (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: They work extremely hard to produce the food that is needed here. And there's a tough competition out there. There's really tough competition out there, and our Island farmers are standing up to that competition; again, because they've heard from a Premier that says: We want to grow exports. We want to make sure that there's an opportunity for you to sell your product on the world market.

So again, the farmer sits down and says: Well, if the government has confidence in me, I should have confidence in myself, so I will invest again. The government is there to help me, to make those investments, and to more importantly, that has been left out for too many years on this Island, is the support of selling our product.

We're great at making – we're great at agriculture, we're great at fisheries.

Mr. LaVie: You're putting everybody to sleep.

Mr. R. Brown: But the important thing is, is to sell.

Mr. LaVie: They're sleeping.

Mr. R. Brown: Any successful company in the world has a tremendous marketing team. You look at any of the big businesses that are extremely successful and profitable, they have a tremendous sales team, and I must say that this government has a tremendous sales team, and the sales team is out selling PEI.

China, around the world, the United States –

Mr. Trivers: Out selling PEI, or selling out PEI?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. R. Brown: Now that we have a phenomenal federal minister of agriculture –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) provinces.

Mr. R. Brown: – in the person of Lawrence MacAulay to be out there, Lawrence has been working extremely hard –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: Lawrence MacAulay has been working extremely hard selling PEI product around the world, and also for our fishermen.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: He's been working extremely hard.

Mr. LaVie: Shutting the (Indistinct) fishery down and you know it.

Mr. R. Brown: And through investments in these newer sectors, also. We have a phenomenal sector in the agriculture and in the fishing industry that puts tremendous amount of money into the economy of Prince Edward –

Like fishermen, farmers spend their money, which puts money into the economy, which is great. But we have a lot of other companies now in Prince Edward Island that are helping grow the economy of Prince Edward Island, and I have to go back to, again, I'm going to be accused of bashing the Tories, but 1989 was a sad day and 1990 was another sad day on Prince Edward Island, when the federal government shut the base in Summerside. I remember I was in city council –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: I went up to march with Basil Stewart. I was proud to march with Basil Stewart to see if we could get that base back open, but there was no listening by the federal government.

Ms. Biggar: Tory government.

Mr. R. Brown: Now, again, provincial Liberal –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Again, a provincial Liberal government was in place. Instead of sitting back and crying about it and saying there's nothing – naught we can do –

Mr. Myers: You went and bought it (Indistinct) can't afford it. Now you own the base.

Mr. R. Brown: What can we do? Did we let the base sit there and let it just go to deterioration?

No. Again, we went out, we looked for industries that could use that base, and anyone that goes on the base now can see the tremendous amount of employment –

Ms. Biggar: Now that we have that runway paved –

Mr. R. Brown: I was getting to that. You stole my line.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: But, you know, the industries that are there in that base today, again, walking through the plants in the Slemon Park is a great treat to see young

Islanders, young new Islanders working at very high-tech jobs.

Ms. Biggar: Great economic development department.

Mr. R. Brown: Some of these engines – you know, would you ever think that we'd be in the jet engine repair business? Would anybody ever think of that? Would anybody ever dream of that?

Mr. Myers: Michael Mayne did. Michael Mayne had all the answers.

Mr. R. Brown: Tories would never dream of that, but Liberals dream of that all the time. How can we make things better?

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We can fix – we can repair jet engines. Jet engines from all over the world are shipped to Prince Edward Island to be repaired by some of the best workers in the world.

Mr. Roach: By Islanders.

Mr. R. Brown: By Islanders.

Mr. Roach: Trained on PEI.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: Again, as the companies grow and grow, and get better, and our product gets better, our turnaround time for the engines get better, we get more jobs; we get more business.

Then they needed space to test their engines because testing was an important part of it. So what does the Liberal government go and do? Help them with a test cells – to make – help test cells be built in Slemon Park. Big investment; an investment that some people may say: It's too big. But, you know, when you look at the people that are working around in Slemon Park today and the investments we have made in Slemon Park have made a lot of – has made the economy greater on Prince Edward Island.

Again, the theme: Getting exports. We have to export. We are an exporting province. If you're not exporting, you're not growing, and the Premier realizes that the more we

can export, the more we can close that gap, the better the economy of Prince Edward Island is; better, and the better the lives of Islanders will be.

So the focus is on growing our economy, but growing our economy gives us a tremendous amount of opportunity in other areas.

I want to also go to – I think one of the best industries we have on Prince Edward Island, I think something that we're getting to be known pretty good at, is the steel fabrication. Again, people saying: Steel fabrication, that's something that's done in Toronto, or that's something that's done in Sudbury, or that's something that's done in Pittsburg. That's something that's done not here on Prince Edward Island.

But we have great entrepreneurs. That's the best part about Prince Edward Island. We have great entrepreneurs on Prince Edward Island, and we have great entrepreneurs like Ronnie MacDougall. That is, I know Ronnie quite well. He has invested his life in his company, and if you go up to Slemmon Park or to his facilities in Borden, you see tons of people working. He saw the confidence that this government had in him, so he went and purchased the old McCain plant, and that plant is being turned around as we speak to become a major manufacturer and fabricator of steel products.

Again, small little Prince Edward Island –

Mr. LaVie: We're not small.

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – competing against the giants.

I was at the youth conference where I think the new minister of education explained it quite well to the students down there, the story of David and Goliath. He went right from one end of it to the other. You know what? It is a story that's good. The students, the young people at that conference were listening intently because you don't lay down and turn over and stop doing things. You face the challenges. That's what the theme of his story was. You face the challenges. If you can face the challenges, big rewards are there in return.

Ronnie faced his challenges in building his company. I must say, through Mike Currie, the former minister, saw the potential of MacDougall steel; saw the great work that he's doing and I must commend Mike Currie for his efforts in that area. It was a lot of work. We were in the opposition at the time encouraging him to invest in Islanders and I think that was a big role of us.

See, when we were in opposition, we were extremely positive because we saw the potential of Islanders. Instead of just criticizing everything, there were times that we assisted the government in making things better for Prince Edward Islanders. I must say –

Mr. Myers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – most of the things we advised the government on turned out pretty good. I know that Mike Currie recognizes that also that how much we did in assisting Mike Currie to create those 38,000 jobs.

Mr. Myers: No, you didn't.

Mr. R. Brown: In 2007, our government has been investing in our post-secondary education. Modernizing and upgrading our facilities. Again, we realize that it's important that if we're going to sell our products and make our products we need a labour force and a workforce that can do that.

It's crucial that we have the right people in the right place in the right time to take advantage of the markets that are out there. There are a tremendous amount of markets. We may think that we are reaching our limits of our markets. We may think: Look, we can't do anymore; we're going as fast as we can. We just can't do it. No, we're just catching our stride now. We're going to go –

Mr. LaVie: It's going to be a long eight weeks.

Mr. R. Brown: – this Island with this throne speech –

Mr. LaVie: Going to be a long eight weeks with (Indistinct) now.

Mr. R. Brown: – Mr. Speaker –

Mr. LaVie: No time this early (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – is giving the gas to the engine –

Mr. LaVie: Long road ahead (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – that will drive the economy of Prince Edward Island even further and we'll make things better for Prince Edward Islanders.

Mr. LaVie: Killing the clock.

Mr. R. Brown: If you look – no, this is important stuff –

Mr. LaVie: It is very important.

Mr. R. Brown: – this is stuff about –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – instilling confidence in people.

Mr. LaVie: Going to be a long session.

Mr. R. Brown: You know.

Mr. LaVie: Right here, you're killing the clock.

Mr. R. Brown: And you know modernization of our institutions. You look at UPEI, the increase –

Mr. LaVie: Give everybody a chance.

Mr. R. Brown: – in learning opportunities out there. You look at one of the things at the new engineering facility, out there. I encourage each and every Islander to go out there and see what's going on in this facility. It's phenomenal what's going on in there. It's phenomenal at seeing young people inventing new things. Inventing new things, inventing new opportunities; inventions are opportunities. Opportunities lead to a growing economy. That facility has catapulted, I think, our young students in dreaming of better ways to do things. When you get better ways and more efficient ways to doing things as they're working out there, again, it creates work; creates employment.

What's the nicest thing about the –

Mr. LaVie: Government (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – engineering facility out there –

Mr. LaVie: Still playing dirty.

Mr. R. Brown: – is their work with the private sector. The university realized that, you know, our students have to learn, but our students have to realize – have to also see real life experiences. That institution is allowing our students. And they're helping companies.

Sometimes, it's, you know, when you get a dusty old brain like a lot of Tories would have, you don't think how things can be done.

Mr. LaVie: It's hard not to laugh.

Mr. R. Brown: You know, these young minds, probably the majority of them are Liberal, if not all of them, are thinking: How can I change this process or that process or make things better?

Mr. Myers: Like the plebiscite?

Mr. R. Brown: And they're thinking – I'll get to that, too. Don't you worry. There's lots of time.

Mr. Myers: I know what you'll do with the results if you got it.

Mr. R. Brown: Lots of time on that agenda item. You'll have your opportunity to speak, also –

Mr. Myers: And I (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – and I just can't wait to hear your speeches because, you know, I don't know how you're going to dig your way out.

Mr. Myers: No digging on this side.

Mr. R. Brown: Again, UPEI has stepped up –

Mr. LaVie: Rural PEI, we know how to work.

Mr. R. Brown: – to the plate, has stepped up. I have visited a few companies where

these students are working. Allan farm equipment; they're out there helping Allan farm equipment, modernize some of its events.

Ms. Biggar: Absolutely.

Mr. R. Brown: Most successful companies didn't start as big companies, didn't start as giants. Google didn't start as a giant. It was a couple of guys inventing a new way to search, do a search engine in computers. Did you know that their patent that's registered with the US patent department is only about four pages or five pages long, but it's a multi-billion dollar company today on a little idea on how to better search the Internet.

Again, this government saw the opportunities that young people want and young people are striving for in our colleges and Holland College. It was great to see the investment that was made in conjunction with the federal government of over \$10 million in modernizing these two institutions.

We see a new culinary institute. Culinary institute is working extremely hard to, again, develop new products, to develop fresh ideas, and ways to better market our product. Again, that's helping our primary industries. Again, that's helping the farmer and the fishermen find markets in and innovative ways in order to sell those things. You can't always do what's being done if you want to advance. You have to look at new ways to do it. Those investments have turned these facilities, I believe, into world class institutions doing world class work, world class research creating world class opportunities for young Islanders on Prince Edward Island, and young new Islanders coming to Prince Edward Island.

Again, the throne speech sets a tone of confidence; sets a tone of willingness of government to put its foot forward; to put its weight behind small companies; to put its foot behind our institutions or our institutions to excel to producing young, sometimes old Islanders, to achieve better things; to achieve better things for themselves, and for their families, and for their communities.

The good word has gotten out. The good word is out there about Prince Edward Island. It's out. It's spread across the world; the good word about how well Prince Edward Island is doing. You know what that good word has done for Prince Edward Island? Has helped grow our population. People are down saying: You know what, this little place in Canada called Prince Edward Island, and everything I read about it is great. It's great. They're behind their people. They want their population to succeed. They want to make sure that everybody benefits from a growing economy. So, our immigration numbers are growing.

The Premier and I and most people in this room, I hope everybody in this room, is proud that our population has reached 150,000, exceeded 150,000, and we have a goal of 160,000 by 2022, which I think we're going to match. I think we're going to – it's great. It's great, not only for the economy of Prince Edward Island, again, new Islanders bring new ideas, bring new money, bring new enthusiasm to Prince Edward Island. Combine that with the enthusiasm of the Islanders that are here now. It creates an environment that is great for everyone.

We will continue to make sure that our population grows. Some people may think we're growing too fast, but I think that there is a tremendous capacity here on Prince Edward Island to grow. With the growth that we have got going on right now, I think that we're absorbing it extremely well and that it's creating a tremendous amount of opportunities for, not only the new Canadians and new Islanders to Prince Edward Island, but for Islanders that have been here for decades.

As I said, I am confident and the theme of my speech is confidence. If you have confidence, you're willing to take a chance, you're willing to think out of the box, you're willing to think of new ideas and that is only good for yourself, for your family, for your community, for your province, and for your country, and good for humanity.

Government is building strong communities through significant investments in the communities. One of the biggest investments that we made to date, I think, on

Prince Edward Island and is a tremendous investment, is our interconnect with our new power cables to New Brunswick.

Again, we hit our limit on the old cables. They're built for 200 megawatts; we were exceeding 250-260. What was that doing to Prince Edward Island? That was limiting our growth. That important link was limiting our growth here on Prince Edward Island. Something had to be done. Either we could sit back and say: Well, this is all we can grow.

Mr. Fox: Thank goodness for Gail Shea.

Mr. R. Brown: No. That's when –

Mr. Roach: Oh. That's when it went off the rails.

Mr. R. Brown: That's when the shock hit.

Mr. Roach: Yeah.

Mr. R. Brown: That's when it was shock. 2005, there was a Tory government in Ottawa, I think – yeah, 2007 or something. They cancelled the cable that was to come to Prince Edward Island.

Ms. Biggar: Shame.

Mr. R. Brown: Shame.

We were ready to excel on Prince Edward Island. We were ready to get going. We were ready to turn that power. We were ready to turn that power into new foodstuff, into new machinery, into new lobster processing facilities –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – into new opportunities. Thank you, minister of transportation; new opportunities. You needed the power to create the opportunity and they shut that door of opportunity to Islanders when they cancelled the cable. What did that do? That said –

Mr. Roach: Killed.

Mr. R. Brown: What did that do? That killed people's confidence, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Roach: Again.

Mr. R. Brown: Killed people's confidence. I don't know why Tories don't have the confidence in the people of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Roach: The fishers (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: The fishery, and the agriculture, and the businesses – Slemmon Park. You've got to be positive in order to make things grow and that transmission has new transmission cables today is a tremendous opportunity for Island companies to expand their businesses. Now they have the power they need in order to expand their businesses. It's vital that they do that.

Mr. Roach: Partnership with the new Liberal government (Indistinct).

Mr. R. Brown: And again, it was a tremendous partnership with a new federal Liberal government and one of the things that was said at the dinner on Friday night by Brian Gallant – the Premier of New Brunswick – which I took to heed. He talked about our Premier at the first ministers table. He talked about – and this is an outside view; an unbiased, outside view.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: No, no, it was – of how our Premier performs at the national table. That performance, at the national table, is only helping Island businesses – Islanders in general. Through that ability to set a new direction for Canada, to help the federal government in wanting a better Canada for Canadians, results in Ottawa, the bureaucracy and the government in Ottawa, having confidence in us.

Mr. Fox: Tell that to seniors who can't get into homes.

Mr. R. Brown: We'll have announcements for that too.

Mr. Fox: Tell that to (Indistinct) next door.

Mr. R. Brown: That's why we have confidence. The federal government looks at Prince Edward Island and says: Okay, these guys are in the right direction. They're going in the right way. Look at all the stats. All I have to – Trudeau's probably saying: Every

time I look at, again, Statistics Canada, there's this little Island in the East Coast is a phenomenal, statistical anomaly, they think.

But it's not an anomaly. It's hard work. It's efforts by both the private sector, the workers, the Premier, the government, the staff in the government – all working to make Prince Edward Island.

Though there had to be a main objective there and the main objective, I think, that started this spur-on was when the concept of Sales Force PEI came about and when the bureaucracy and businesses and trade association said: Okay, Sales Force PEI, that's a good idea.

We always were talking about expanding businesses – allowing businesses, but then businesses were left on their own to compete in the world market. By the assistance of Sales Force PEI, in order to get out there and find those markets and to find the processors and the manufacturers to fill those markets, is phenomenal.

Any good company – any successful company is successful because of its marketing and sales opportunities. You may have the best product in the world. You may have the best processes in the world, but if you have nowhere to sell them, it's no good. You need sales for them.

The new transmission cable allows us that opportunity – allows our opportunity, also, to expand our wind farms here on Prince Edward Island – to expand our renewable industry on Prince Edward Island because when I think – and it's personal – when you see the transmission cable coming from Newfoundland, through to New Brunswick, into New Brunswick and into upper Canada, or down to the United States market, there's going to be a phenomenal opportunity for Prince Edward Island wind producers.

It's going to be a phenomenal opportunity for PEI Energy Corporation to capture some of that market. It's an opportunity to build more wind farms here on Prince Edward Island. We know that we have one of the best wind regimes in the world. Our capacity is exceeding the expectation of the experts. We can produce more power out of our wind than almost any place in the world – except, I'd say, for Denmark – which is on the coast

also. We have a great wind regime here. Working with our sister provinces in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, there's a phenomenal opportunity to create a good production of green energy in Atlantic Canada – which benefits all Atlantic Canada.

When the power's coming out of Churchill Falls or Muskrat Falls, coming down through, we can jump on that line because now we have two new power cables which doubles our capacity, which allows us to export more power into that grid – again, supplying an export market of green energy. There's a tremendous, big tender out right now in the United States for a ton of green energy and that's going to be – there's a tremendous opportunity for us to participate in it.

The reason we can participate is the great work of the Wind Energy Institute of Canada, in the Member of Tignish-Palmer Road's district. It's a great test facility up there. They do a tremendous amount of great work. They took the initiative to go out and find ways to do things. I was involved as part of the PEI Hydrogen Village trying new ideas. You don't succeed in all ideas, but that doesn't stop you. It shouldn't stop you. You should keep going.

Another thing we don't encourage enough is taking the chance. When you take a chance, there's a risk in taking a chance and you need somebody there to backstop you on that risk, or at least give you words of encouragement of keep going. If you don't succeed, keep going. Keep it up and keep working because a lot of the biggest companies in the world today were bankrupt, or they learned their lessons and they moved on and made their company better.

We can't be so tied up in making sure that we are not able to make a mistake that we're not going to end up doing nothing. We've got to encourage them and we've got to encourage them if there is a mistake made: Look, we're going to back you up here. We're going to give it a shot. We're going to try it again and maybe it'll work this time or the next time, but we're not going to tie you down in making sure that you're going to be a success.

I know that's hard for some people to consider because you may spend so much time on making sure that you are going to be successful, that you never get the opportunity to be successful because you never take the chance of trying to be successful.

Again, we have confidence in our people to say: Take those chances, young Islanders. Take the chance and we'll back you up and that's why you see a lot of young Islander. That's why the facility was built on the corner of Water and Queen Street – happily in my district. I consider Prince Edward Island as my district because when all of Prince Edward Island is doing good, my district's doing good. There's a lot of time there we should be thinking of that more because if something happens in somebody else's district that's good for Prince Edward Island, that's good for all of us. That's good.

Borden, things are going booming in Borden, there, you know. There are some good projects, I think, are going to be coming out. I could get up and be like some of you guys over there and criticize, like: I'm not getting it all. I'm not getting it all. I want it all. Or I can sit back and say you know what? I don't need it all. Prince Edward Island is a big place when it comes to – we have 27 electoral districts, maybe down to 18.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) close our schools.

Mr. R. Brown: Nope.

Mr. LaVie: Close our fish plants.

Mr. R. Brown: Nope. No, they were –

Mr. LaVie: Shut down –

Mr. R. Brown: – see –

Mr. LaVie: – our (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – that's the problem with Tories. They have blackouts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: They have blackouts.

Mr. LaVie: You should be ashamed, Premier. You should be ashamed.

Mr. R. Brown: They forget. No, well you're the one saying the argument.

Mr. LaVie: Should be ashamed (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – no, I'm not ashamed.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: You know what?

Mr. LaVie: You should be ashamed.

Mr. R. Brown: Remembrance Day was the people – the veterans fought so I could stand here and talk about what I think about my Prince Edward Island. That's why they fought, and that's why it was a shame when candidates were out working that day instead of remembering our veterans.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: They fought. Our veterans fought so we could be here and one day a year is not much time to take out and remember them, and to remember our first responders and remember the people that are in the military now.

Also, we have 19 communities right across Prince Edward Island benefitting from a \$90 million investment in water and wastewater production on Prince Edward Island. Again, the government showing confidence in communities; again, the government showing confidence in the people of Prince Edward Island; again, willing to put an investment in to make the lives of Islanders better; again, allowing families to take a chance to build a home, to build a family, to be a part of the community.

At the end of the day that's what it's all about; participating. We leave Islanders out and don't allow them to participate in the growing economy. That's not fair. So, again: \$90 million investment in communities across Prince Edward Island.

Now, a lot of this investment, if not all of it, is underground. It is vital to the economy of Prince Edward Island and is vital to the environment of Prince Edward Island. If you don't have the necessary infrastructure to take your – the wastewater or to provide you with water, then again that limits growth in

your community. That limits growth in the economy.

These vital pieces of infrastructure as you see evolving over the last number of years, especially over the last two years in terms of investments in critical infrastructure that's necessary for the development of our economy. This \$90 million has gone a tremendous way in helping the economy of Prince Edward Island.

Our Capital Budget will lay out a plan for more infrastructure investment that will improve the lives of Islanders.

Now, a lot of governments would probably look at that \$90 million in investments and saying: Well, you know, there's not much credit there. If it's not above ground and if it's not a big cornerstone to it, there's really nothing – it's not political good if we don't have a cornerstone.

As I used to say to Chester Gillan, when he was the minister of education; he was running around trying to put cornerstones everywhere. I always said to Chester Gillan, I said: Chester Gillan, I would rather see a student's name on a diploma than a minister's name on a cornerstone. I'll give that up anytime. To put a student's name on a diploma because it's important for that – and we're going to see major investments –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Another piece of – another thing I'm extremely proud of –

Mr. LaVie: Allan Campbell's name has one up in Souris (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – is another piece of vital infrastructure that is going to be added to Prince Edward Island's infrastructure here on Prince Edward Island. That is the investment that the province is going to be making in high-speed fibre network –

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: – right across Prince Edward Island.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: There's no mistake about it, it's been said –

Mr. LaVie: Must be an election coming in the spring.

Mr. R. Brown: – it's been said –

Ms. Biggar: Get ready.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) since 2011.

Mr. R. Brown: It's been said that the Internet and connection to the Internet is just as important as electricity; just as important as water.

Mr. Trivers: The Tories built (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: It's really important.

Ms. Biggar: Did you know that's fibre op in it?

Mr. R. Brown: I heard a comment over there that the Tories built the first Internet here on Prince Edward Island –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – well, when we came in power Canada Post could deliver a page, a sheet of paper faster than their Internet that they developed. Canada Post could deliver a page up to Souris much quicker than the Internet they could –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: – in the middle of the winter in the middle of a storm.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fox: Now, thanks to you all mail now goes to Halifax and has to come back.

Ms. Compton: We still don't have Internet.

Mr. R. Brown: Oh no! That's why –

Mr. Roach: That was the federal Tories that pulled that one.

Mr. R. Brown: – oh yeah –

Mr. Roach: It was the federal Tories that pulled that one.

Mr. R. Brown: – and again we're fighting the federal Tories on that. But that fibre – and do you know the nice about it? You know the big part about this fibre investment?

Mr. LaVie: Bring Ghiz back.

Mr. R. Brown: The big –

Mr. LaVie: We want Ghiz.

Mr. R. Brown: – thing here that people are missing out on? This is going to be owned by the people of Prince Edward Island. This is going to be owned by them. This is going to be owned by them for them. It's going to –

Mr. Trivers: You gave it away for God's sakes.

Mr. R. Brown: – be owned by them. No, you guys gave it away.

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: You guys gave it away. Now, it's –

Mr. Roach: You've got a pig in a poke (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – there's a major shift occurring here and I don't think people are realizing it –

Mr. Fox: Should have listened to this guy (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – that the Internet, we consider it as vitally important to the economy of Prince Edward Island; to the families of Prince Edward Island; to the communities of Prince Edward Island, that we are going to build it –

Mr. LaVie: Should have (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – we're going to put in place, like our –

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – roads system –

Ms. Biggar: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – as our road system.

When you see this investment done at the end of the day there is going to be access for local businesses across Prince Edward Island to compete around the world because today's – the Internet today is a global thing. If you're not on the Internet today, you're not in business. We recognize that. No longer are we going to, I guess, follow the big communication companies in telling them what we're going to be doing. We're taking the lead.

Mr. Trivers: You build a backbone that (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: We're taking a lead. Yeah. You know what? When the backbone is built it'll be cheaper for Islanders to get on the Internet.

An Hon. Member: Oh really?

Mr. R. Brown: That money won't be going to the big companies. It'll be staying here on Prince Edward Island –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – again, that's again that's a good lesson for you there –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct) build a wireless network (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – on economics, is a good lesson for you –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – if you keep the money on the Island –

Mr. Trivers: (Indistinct)

Ms. Biggar: Back to (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – it grows the Island economy –

Ms. Biggar: Back to your (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: – That's something you guys don't learn –

Mr. Trivers: You guys would have started when you came in you would have a wireless network today right across the Island, high-speed.

Mr. LaVie: Question Period (Indistinct)

Mr. Roach: They don't really know they're (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: There are many people on Prince Edward Island who struggle with day-to-day challenges of living in poverty. We need to do better for these people. That begins with a better understanding of the root causes of poverty.

Before the year is out government will introduce a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. It will look at the challenges of people faces – finding affordable housing; putting food on the table and accessing health care, education and employment.

Increasing our understanding of poverty and its causes will help make the changes needed to improve the lives of vulnerable Islanders. Again, we're saying to Islanders: no one is going to be left behind. We're growing the economy. It's a great economy and we're going to take the advantages of that economy and help the less unfortunate people here on Prince Edward Island.

Another thing I'm extremely proud of here on Prince Edward Island. I'm very pleased with the work of our new child lawyer in doing the help –

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: – of vulnerable children in high-conflict situations caused because of divorce or separation. There was a right way to do things and there was a political way to do things –

Ms. Biggar: Yes.

Mr. R. Brown: – the Premier chose to do the right thing and to hire a frontline person –

Ms. Biggar: Because he's a great leader.

Mr. R. Brown: – to get involved here.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) fired.

Mr. R. Brown: There was a story in the paper about our new child lawyer and the tremendous work she's doing, and the staff

around her. I commend the child lawyer for the work she does. It's a tremendous, hard job. One of the hardest jobs I think there must be is child protection and ensuring that our children on Prince Edward Island have the most protection they can have, especially when there's a family situation occurring.

I was extremely proud of being part of a government that came in with a multitude of four pieces of legislation to help this.

Last session, as I said, was one of the defining moments of my career in this Legislature when we came together and when the staff was on the floor and the Premier was on the floor describing the work of the child lawyer. I don't think a lot of us understood it at the time; it was a new concept. It took something to do.

And we could have went like all the other provinces. We could have followed and said: Okay, we're making a child advocate that will audit and check and audit and check, and we could have followed. But no, we chose to lead. Leading is where things happen and lives become better. And by leading, we're helping a lot of families here. We're helping a lot of children here, and I must say I know that each and every one of us were proud to leave the Legislature last time with those four pieces of legislation passed, with the great work of the Premier and his staff.

And the proof is in the pudding when you saw – when you heard –

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: When you heard the story – look, I'm worried about the people. I want to make sure that the vulnerable people on Prince Edward Island, the people in need, are being – and those four pieces of legislation have gone a long way to helping a lot of children on Prince Edward Island.

Mr. LaVie: (Indistinct) worried about District 11 right now.

Mr. R. Brown: And we just saw the other day –

Mr. Roach: The guy in front of you (Indistinct) the guy with boots on the ground.

Mr. R. Brown: We just saw the other day the minister of social services helping out a group of (Indistinct) people that we have –

An Hon. Member: Seniors.

Mr. R. Brown: – forgot about a lot of the time, and that's grandparents helping their children.

Mr. Roach: Yes sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Brown: The old days, you lived next to your mother or you lived next to your parents – I lived with my parents longer than I should have, but –

Mr. LaVie: You're living longer than you should (Indistinct).

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. LaVie: Oh.

An Hon. Member: In two minutes.

Mr. R. Brown: Grandparents – and we all saw them. We all saw the grandparents here in the Legislature and the tremendous amount of hard work they do, to tremendous amount of commitment they have to their children and their grandchildren, and that was a good day for Islanders when that announcement was made –

Ms. Biggar: And for grandparents and children.

Mr. R. Brown: – that we were going to help grandparents out, because all through history, grandparents were there to help. There was a transition, but we're going back to grandparents, and you know that investment in grandparents, again – grandparents, you just take a little bit of worry off some of these groups, and that little bit of worry, you take it away. You compensate for it or you look at it.

There's a tremendous amount of opportunity that comes out of removing that little bit of worry, and I think we're going to see phenomenal results from that investment in our grandparents in Prince Edward Island, and that's going to help the children of Prince Edward Island. That's going to help

the future of Prince Edward Island. That's going to make sure economy's better here on Prince Edward Island.

Now, I'm going to turn it over to my friend from Tignish-Palmer Road. No, I'm not. I'm just joking with you.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Mr. R. Brown: Just trying to get you excited.

Mr. LaVie: This is not a joke.

Mr. R. Brown: I was going to talk short, but there's so many good things going on here on Prince Edward Island. There's so many good things announced in this throne speech, and the main theme of it is people. People concerned about Islanders; everyday average Islanders. That's what the theme is. That's what we come here for, when we got to door-to-door, we see average Islanders wanting better government, and I think this throne speech is laying for a pathway for better government.

I'll call for adjournment of the debate, Mr. Speaker, because I'm getting a little tired.

An Hon. Member: Call the hour.

Mr. Roach: Call the hour.

Speaker: The hour has been called.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. McIsaac: I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, November 16th, at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Shall it carry? Carried.

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