

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

Hansard, Published by Order of the Legislature

Third Session of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly

Friday, 17 November 2017

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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.

A pleasure to welcome the guests in the gallery and those watching from home, and a pleasure to see Wayne MacMillan here, a frequent attendee; and Halbert Pratt, who's involved with Pat and the Elephant and will be spoken about later; and our deputy minister of health and wellness, Dr. Kim Critchley.

There's a lot of things going on this weekend, and Friday tends to go that way in recognition, but there's several that I must mention. One is a big dinner tonight in Cornwall for the Nichola Goddard Foundation. Journalist Chantal Hébert will be the guest speaker there. That's always a great event.

In fact, there's a second event, another great one out that way tonight at the Kingston Legion, with a District 17 Liberal dinner with the hon. Robert Mitchell as guest speaker. We're going right into it.

First thing tomorrow morning with a pancake breakfast in East Royalty for the District 9 Liberals or anybody that wants to come; it's free with donations to the Salvation Army Toys for Tots. Actually, it's one of their big kickoffs of their Christmas season and a great part played in that by the East Royalty Lions.

Unfortunately, that's timed in the same slot as the Brackley Beach group raising funds for the community centre, so we'll certainly want people to know that that's going on. If they get to both I'd appreciate it, and I'm sure that the good people in Brackley Beach would generally get to those and they're a great group out there to support their community.

On Sunday, there will be the PEI symphony presenting a Cantata for Canada 150 as part of our 150<sup>th</sup> sesquicentennial celebrations,

and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of the symphony.

At the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce excellence awards on Wednesday night, I'm proud to note that three of the big awards went to companies led by residents of my district, York-Oyster Bed: Canada's Island Garden, with Edwin Jewell in the lead, of York, won for the emerging business; the Gahan House Pub won for the Excellence in Business Award; and the PEI Brewing Company won for excellence in exports. Those latter two companies are led by Kevin and Kathy Murphy, who are residents of Stanhope.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Premier MacLauchlan:** The Murphys are a great business family and they're outstanding contributors to our Island community.

**Mr. Myers:** To the Liberal party, for sure.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** If we consider the number of employees of Kevin and Kathy Murphy, combined with the Islanders who work for Kevin's brother Danny, also a resident of Stanhope, we're talking about more than 2,000 employees and literally tens of thousands of customers who can be found throughout our province and represented in every electoral district in our province, and I might say in none more so than Charlottetown-Parkdale.

In combination with their business leadership, the Murphys have been extraordinarily committed and generous to community causes.

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Those are too numerous to mention here, but since yesterday's remarks, critical of the likes of the Murphys, were made in the context of an announcement of support for arts and culture –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) privilege, this is greetings.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – let's note the significant part –

**Mr. Myers:** You want to be disrespectful to me?

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – that the Murphys played –

**Mr. Myers:** I'll be disrespectful to you when (Indistinct)

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – in three cultural initiatives.

**Speaker:** Okay.

**Mr. Myers:** Greetings are supposed to be friendly. You don't want to be friendly? Let's not be friendly.

I'm on the list.

**Speaker:** Okay, hon. Member.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Three cultural initiatives, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Catherine MacLellan's *If It's Alright With You*, Lennie Gallant's *Searching for Abegweit*, and Tara MacLean's *Atlantic Blue*.

While it's regrettable that remarks the likes of those made yesterday would be made in this House, it's timely for the employees or the customers or the friends or the business partners of the Murphys, as people are being asked for their support in a coming by-election.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

It's always a pleasure to rise in the Legislative Assembly and bring greetings and talk about some events that are upcoming.

I'd like to start off by talking about an event that was held last night. The Premier would like to reference the by-election in the

Charlottetown-Parkdale district –

**Mr. Myers:** He's not allowed in there. We saw the poll.

**An hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, there was a wonderful event held last evening. It was an all-candidates forum, and it was hosted by the Young Voters of PEI. I'd like to congratulate Jesse Hitchcock and her organizing crew for putting on a great event; but more importantly –

**Ms. Biggar:** Employee of my department.

**Leader of the Opposition:** But more importantly, it was great to see that all four candidates were able to actually be there. There was a lot of concern that only three were going to be there, that one individual, unfortunately, for some unknown reason, didn't want to be there; but he did finally agree to show up, and I think it was a very spirited conversation last night and there was excellent questions came towards the four individuals.

There's also a very important sporting activity that's taking place this weekend as well. Of course, I'm referring to the early bird hockey tournament. I'd like to send out all my best wishes to all of the young hockey players, coaches, trainers, parents, to wish them all the best in the tournament. I know that it's more or less the start of the season for the hockey tournaments and the teams have been working hard preparing for this. I wish them all the best. I'm looking forward to attending the breakfast tomorrow morning at Sherwood school as the kick-off to this tournament.

In closing, I know there was a lot of mention of the previous member for District 11 here on the first day of the sitting of the Legislature. I just wanted to wait until towards the end of the week. Doug Currie and I have known each other for a very long time, back to the days where he grew up in Parkdale, I grew up in Sherwood –

**Mr. LaVie:** Good guy.

**Mr. Aylward:** Mr. Currie, I thought was a tremendous minister –

**Mr. Fox:** Premier material.

**Mr. Aylward:** – here for the Province of Prince Edward Island.

**Mr. LaVie:** Premier material.

**Mr. Aylward:** He carried the workload of the government for many years on probably the two biggest files that any minister would have to carry; that being education and health to the point where Mr. Currie had to continually be shuffled back and forth to realign and to put his shoulder to the wheel on those.

The one thing, besides sitting across from Mr. Currie that I will miss, is the spirited discussions that I have with his father down at the Curries Shoe Repair to find out how Mrs. Currie on Confederation Street, felt about the questions that I was asking her son. Apparently, there were quite a few occasions where she wasn't too happy with me. I assure Mrs. Currie, it was always in good spirit and I was simply doing my job.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It's nice to see everybody here today. Welcome to everybody in the gallery. I, too, would like to congratulate and thank the Young Voters of PEI for an excellent event last night. A crowded room, and a chance for the voters of District 11 to see all four candidates fact-to-face, side-by-side and make their own decisions as to the relative attributes of those four people. Thank you to Jesse and all of the other organizers for that.

I also want to make mention of an event the Premier mentioned in his remarks, the Nichola Goddard fundraiser, which, I believe, is tomorrow night, actually. I look forward to being there. It's a wonderful event and a great homage to an extraordinary person. Her parents are just extraordinary people.

Finally, simultaneously with that event, is a five-year anniversary event being hosted by the Citizens' Alliance. It's five years since Plan B was finally approved and built. They will be hosting an event at the Farm Centre, again on Saturday night. I think there will be some celebrating. I think there will be some commiserating, but it will be an interesting event with a lot of wonderful citizens from here on Prince Edward Island who care deeply about our province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

It's kind of hard to believe how fast this week went, but it's been a great week, and great to be back in the Legislature and debate and get the good news out of what our government is doing for Islanders.

I'd like to recognize Mr. Halbert Pratt from Pat and the Elephant, that's here this morning. I'll be speaking a little bit more about the great work that that organization does and other transportation groups a little bit later.

I would like to extend my sympathies on behalf of all of here in the Legislature to the family of Gerry Thomas. Gerry was a Lennox Island Band Council member, who passed away. It was just several weeks ago that we had an opportunity to all get together and meet with MCPEI representatives and we extend our sympathies to the band, to the community of Lennox Island and to Gerry's family on his passing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Dumville:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's good to be here on a Friday morning you sir and the rest of my colleagues. I'd like to extend a greeting to all those out that's watching us in West Royalty-Springvale. I'd like to welcome Dr. Critchley here today, and our guests in the lobby here.

I'd also like to extend my sympathies out to Harold and Anita Smith on the passing of Margaret Shaw. Margaret Shaw had been a citizen of Prince Edward Island, in her 110<sup>th</sup> year. She was a great lady. She'll be missed by all of her friends and family. I had the pleasure of attending her funeral in DeSable this week. It showed how remarkable a lady she was because at 110 years of age, and the church was full. That's some community spirit for that lady and it's well deserved.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everybody in the House today. I just wanted to, on the radio this morning, I heard Kristen Cameron is returning home to hold a meet and greet and a celebration of such as UPEI has come full circle on accessibility for persons with disabilities. To hear her and how upbeat she is on the radio this morning, she was a hockey coach, and I think the year was 2012 she was hit by a drunk driver and paralyzed in the prime of her life.

I can tell you by hearing her on the radio this morning and how she transformed her life and adjusted; learning to drive again, she talked and giggled about learning to drive on the 401 in Toronto. It's pretty uplifting. I will say, prior to this life, I was contracted by the university to do a study on accessibility and today they're being, or this Monday, I believe it is, they're being recognized for that and all that they do.

I just wanted to touch, too, that it's important for everybody to recognize what disability means. It's not just wheelchair, which a lot of people think of when you say the word 'disability.' Disability, 25% of the people over the age of 65 have some form of disability. Everybody has friends, family, and relatives, and we're just one step away from being in a chair, and that's all it takes. If you can think of it like that, I think a lot of people will have more respect for persons with disabilities and recognize the fact that as we have an aging demographic we should continue to do as much as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to be here on a Friday morning. I certainly look forward to the day's activity here in the Legislature. I'm sure it'll be exciting.

I want to give a shout-out to my mom, who follows along closely. I know she watches every day. She always tells me I do a good job. I assume she's right. I'll take her word for it, at least.

**Mr. LaVie:** She's right.

**Mr. Myers:** I want to give a shout-out to my son, Luke. He's taking advantage of his day off from school today for parent-teacher interviews. He's travelling around with one of his buddies, around the Maritimes. They're looking at schools. It's an exciting time for him. He didn't want my help. He wanted to go alone. I'm a little bit nervous. I called him a couple of times to make sure he wasn't getting lost. He's only on his way to Moncton, so far, so surely he's been there enough that he probably knows his way around there.

I want to say, someone has a birthday tomorrow. They've been really quiet about it. They've had their head down, they haven't said much, but I want to say happy birthday to the Member from Morell-Mermaid. Hopefully, he has a fun day tomorrow. I hear he's going to be travelling around the rinks. If anybody sees him around the early bird tomorrow, be sure to tap him on the shoulder and say: happy birthday.

I'm not sure how old his is, but I'll tell you, he's a lot grayer than when he started here two years ago.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. R. Brown:** Get some of the dye.

**Mr. Myers:** Get some of that dye. Maybe, yeah, maybe the Member from

Charlottetown-Victoria Park can give you some tips on how to dye hair.

**Mr. R. Brown:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** Don't do it, just don't do it between the afternoon session and the evening session: people will notice.

Also, I always like to use greetings for things positive. I know sometimes in the Legislature things get said and they get under people's skin. I'm going to call on the Premier's better nature. I know he took a shot at me here, this morning. I was initially angry, which – because I don't believe that is discourse. I'm going to call on the Premier's better nature and I'm going to say if he really wants somebody to defend; if he really wants to look after for somebody here on Prince Edward Island besides the likes of Kevin Murphy, who can look out for himself. Kevin can call me anytime he's angry at me, and he has, many times. He can call me if he's angry. He can vent himself.

Would the Premier please step in and ensure that the youth choir gets to sing *O'Canada* for the Symons Lecture when Justin Trudeau is here.

I think it's a terrible thing to do to those young students who come in, who dedicate their time to be a part of that choir. I really think we all should together push on the Confederation Centre to ensure that the youth choir, who dedicates so much time to be a part of that wonderful choir. That's a wonderful experience for them, and something that they're very proud to be a part of, that they have the opportunity to sing *O'Canada* for the Symons Lecture when the Prime Minister is (Indistinct)

If the Premier really wants to look-out for somebody today, if he really wants to defend an Islander today, could he please look-out for those students?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly want to acknowledge all those that are in the gallery here today as well as those that are watching online – my dad especially, George Henderson. He's been a former member of the House here and he always is a great observer of the Legislature. I think I can – he may be looking for me where I'm at, but I can tell him here today: I did finally make the front bench of the government side and I'm not finding it right comfortable here lately, but I happen to have some reinforcements with me here today –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) behind you.

**Mr. Henderson:** – my deputy, Dr. Kim Critchley is here today. This is her first time to come to Question Period, so I welcome her here today. She's a great advocate for health care in this province. She's a great person to work with and I have every confidence in her abilities in dealing with some of the very difficult issues that we face on a very regular and daily basis here in the Department of Health and Wellness. So with that, I welcome her.

The other thing I wanted to acknowledge is that the O'Leary Firemenettes Christmas Craft Fair is on this weekend in O'Leary at the O'Leary Legion. Anybody who is looking for some really good and interesting crafts and wreaths and things of that nature, come on to O'Leary and support a very worthy cause and get some great Christmas gifts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

**Mr. McIsaac:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to be back and good to be here on Friday morning. I want to welcome everyone in the gallery and I want to put a shout-out to all my constituents in District 5 Vernon River-Stratford.

I was at the PEI Federation of Agriculture on Thursday. I had a great chat with the people there – different commodities, how they come together under the one organization there. We talked about the

great weather, the great fall to get the harvest in and there's no shutting down at all. I was talking to Ian Drake: he's already had two steers picked out for the Easter Beef show in the spring, so that's absolutely awesome. Things continue to move in agriculture and we certainly congratulate them for the contribution they make to our province and to the economy of this province.

Today, the PEI Potato Board is having their annual meeting, down at Red Shores. I'll have the opportunity to go and speak to them and that is absolutely terrific. Rodney Dingwell and his board are doing a great job there. I look forward to talking to them on that.

Another very positive thing that's happening today: this afternoon at 2:00 p.m. the Senate of Canada 150 medals are being presented to 24 different Islanders – every one of them exceptional and deserving of the medal, but I just want to point out one. I know you always get in trouble doing that. I know quite a few of them, but one of them happens to be a very close friend of mine from college days, Dan MacKinnon from Sandy Rae Farms down in Brooklyn. He's receiving a medal for community involvement and he has certainly been involved in his community, not only in his church, but he's on our Dairy Farms of PEI board. He's the chair of the Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame, he spent many years on the Valacta board, looking after milk recording – very, very deserving man, so congrats to Dan MacKinnon from Sandy Rae Farms – very deserving recipient of the Senate of Canada 150 medal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure to rise in the House today on this Friday morning and welcome everyone to the gallery – all the colleagues back. A shout-out to everyone in District 18 Rustico-Emerald.

A week ago today, Cecily Gallant passed away at the age of 96. She was an integral part of the North Rustico community and she had 13 children and I want to send my condolences out to them. They, too, have a huge impact on the community and they carry on her legacy.

Also, I wanted to send a shout-out to Kevin Clory. He's a District 11 resident who's a strong Progressive Conservative and I know that he watches these proceedings on a regular basis in the Legislature, so Hello, Kevin.

I just wanted to also wish good luck to everyone in the early bird tournament. My son is playing today with the Gulf Storm Novice AA team. They had a good game. I was down at the Cody Banks Arena – had our own little political panel there today – talked a little bit about irrigation. In fact, Eddie King was even there and we had a good conversation for sure. So, I wish luck to all those people.

I just wanted to recognize that I've heard that there's a quietly – a little roundabout being planned for Oyster Bed Bridge in the Premier's district. People are reaching out to me about it and I'm not sure why it's so quiet – perhaps you may even call it secretive. You would think that this government would have heard Islander when they were talking to them about roundabouts. When I went across the Island this summer, it was very clear that if they're going to build roundabouts, make sure they're big enough, make sure they're in the right spots. So please, minister of transportation – please, please listen to Islanders – maybe even hold an infrastructure summit. That would be amazing.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to wish everyone a great day in the House.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Hello. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome everyone in the gallery here today. Thanks very much for coming. It does mean a lot to actually see people in the gallery and I enjoy that.

I'd like to say hello to everybody this morning in District 19, up in Borden-Kinkora. They're a great bunch up there and I was really enthused by how many of them came out the other night and joined the hon. member down in Crapaud to express their need and concerns on health care in PEI – and especially rural PEI –

**Ms. Biggar:** I thought you meant the (Indistinct)

**Mr. Fox:** – which I think is eroding.

If I wanted to listen to you, I'd ask you.

I'd also like to say hello to Joey. Welcome to the House today. Him and I chat back and forth and it's great to see him here and do his blog. I'd also like to say hi to everybody watching online today and everybody watching on Eastlink.

Tonight, my wife and I will be attending the PEI Potato Board supper. I'm looking very much to that. I think our farmers do so much across the Island for the environment and to good stewardship and produce probably the best potatoes in the world. I want to thank them for that.

Tomorrow night, I want to give a shout-out to the Kinkora Fire Department – will be having their annual dinner in Kinkora to honour their firefighters and the services they provide to the Kinkora area and the surrounding communities and mutual aid and to all firemen across the Island for what they do.

Actually, on the way this morning, I saw some red lights coming behind me and I pulled over and – I think it was around quarter to eight – members of Borden were responding to somewhere. I hope it wasn't anything too serious and that they all returned safely home.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good morning, all my colleagues and everyone in the House today – everyone watching home in District 20 Kensington-Malpeque, especially Leo Arsenault. Leo's an avid watcher every day of the Legislature and I've been meaning to give him a shout-out and I thought today would be a good day to do so.

At this time, I would like to mention to everybody in my district: on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, myself as the MLA and the Kensington Lions Club will be teaming up for a pancake and sausage breakfast, with all proceeds, donations, and canned goods going to the food bank. The Lions Club in Kensington does a tremendous job every year putting funds and goods towards the food bank for the winter. We decided to do a mutual breakfast, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30 a.m. at the new Kensington Legion and hopefully everybody in the district can get out and support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to welcome everyone into the gallery also and also those from District 1 Souris-Elmira that are watching from home.

Before I forget, I do want to wish the member from Morell a happy birthday. I almost forgot with everything that's going on. I'm not sure whether the grey hairs come from that chair, or the age.

**Mr. Myers:** Probably both.

**Mr. LaVie:** I've got a number of things going on this weekend and tonight, it's an honour. This evening is the appreciation dinner for the Souris Fire Department, which I was a member now for the last 36 years. I get to present medals this evening to the members with long-serving time and this evening I get to award a medal to a member

that has 40 years. Sterling MacDonald – he has 40 years – he has 40 years plus, but he was with another department at the time. That’s an honour when you can give a member a 40 year medal.

Tomorrow evening, the farmers in Eastern Kings – Bonnie and Wayne Townshend organize a meal for all the farmers, all the workers, all the suppliers and it’s a full house at the Fortune Community Centre and all our proceeds do go to the Fortune Community Centre, so a big shout-out to Wayne and Bonnie Townshend for organizing this. It’s a great meal – all the farmers there, they’re all talking, and for what the farmers do for our land and feed us daily, not only us but the whole world, that’s what those farms do. So, I appreciate that meal every year.

A good gesture last night, and it’s one that hit home with me, when I left the House last night I had a flat tire in my truck. Here I am in the parking lot, all alone with a flat tire. What do I do at 9:30 at night when no garage is open, and 84 kilometres from home?

The environment minister met me in the parking lot and he says: What’s the problem, Colin? I said: I’ve got a flat tire on my truck; I can’t get my spare off. What do I do?

What does he do? He offers me his wife, Bonnie’s car. Jump in with me, he said. Let’s go out and pick up my wife’s car, and you go to Souris, he said.

**Mr. Myers:** He’d make a good leader for that party.

**Ms. Compton:** He would have.

**Mr. LaVie:** He said there’s a quarter of a tank of gas in it. It’ll get you to Souris and it’ll get you back to town first thing in the morning, he said.

**An Hon. Member:** Nice.

**Mr. LaVie:** Well, I got to Souris and the gaslight came on, Mr. Speaker –

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** You were driving too fast.

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct) free ride.

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah, so much for the free ride home and the free ride back, he –

**Mr. Aylward:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacEwen:** (Indistinct) gave you the minister’s car.

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah, he should have given me his car.

But that’s just how we work. That’s what we call working together. He took me out of a bind and I appreciate the minister of environment for what he did to me last night, and got me back to work here this morning, so thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Aylward:** Sorry about the small dent in the back (Indistinct) fender.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

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

**Ms. Mundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That’s a great story to follow. Thank you for sharing that with us this morning, and it is – you’re absolutely right – about working together.

It gives me great pleasure to rise here this morning as well and to welcome all those viewing at home in Summerside-St. Eleanors, and there’s a lot going on in Summerside this weekend as well; very busy spot.

But there’s one event that I do want to take a moment and just highlight, and that is the Generation XX fundraising dinner on Saturday night. I will be out in the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning’s territory at the Miscouche Rec Centre.

Generation XX is not just a place where youth of Summerside go to skateboard and hang out. It is a place where the youth of Summerside can go and feel secure, safe, and supported, and I want to congratulate and tip my hat to Gordie Whitlock and to Angie Arsenault and their team in there,

because we all know that every child needs a champion. We've all had someone in our lives that has believed in us, even when we didn't believe in ourselves, and that is what the team at Generation XX – they give the youth of Summerside a voice, and they are champions for the youth of Summerside, so I want to thank them for all the work they do in helping the youth of Summerside feel supported and support them as they navigate life's twists and turns, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, let's all have a great day today, and have a wonderful weekend.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh, here we go.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you –

**Mr. R. Brown:** (Indistinct) the birthday boy.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's fitting that we were just talking about Generation XX there from the minister. I wasn't going to get up and say anything today, but then I've seen two of our future leaders come into the gallery today: Lindsay Sanderson's with us, a former Page, and Jacob MacDonald, a current Page, are with us here today.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacEwen:** I can't go into all of the great things they do in the community, but one thing I want to highlight is them and the Morell High leadership class. They take on projects every year and causes and they raise a lot of money and they learn about what they're doing, and this year I was so happy to hear that all the money they're raising, the projects they're doing are all around mental health initiatives, and I think that's timely in the province, and I want to thank them for all their hard work – not only at the fundraisers do they (Indistinct) do them to raise money for the initiative, but they also educate. They have presentations and they educate all the people that are coming in. They're doing a wonderful job and we appreciate you guys being here today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome to everyone here in the gallery. Welcome to the deputy minister of health. I hope you enjoy the show today. It should be good.

To everyone in District 4, I hope that everyone in the gallery and everyone here in the House will come out to District 4. We've got a very busy weekend coming.

I'd like to do a shout out to Minnie Carver. She watches every day and she loves to hear what we have to say, and she always tells me what she thinks and is very honest, and the Carvers are a great family in the district.

I want to also wish happy anniversary to Mary and Lynwood MacPherson – Lynwood a former Member of the Legislative Assembly, a neighbour of mine, great community people – and so happy anniversary to them today.

This weekend in the district, we've got the Wood Islands area craft fair. It's put on by the development corporation. It's down at Plough the Waves, or the centre in Wood Islands. It's on tomorrow from ten until two. Lots of really good crafts and great Christmas gifts.

Tonight, we've got a play, *The Plight Before Christmas*, put on by the Murray Players. It's actually a new venue this year. It's actually in Murray River, not Murray Harbour. It's on this even at 7:00 p.m., tomorrow at 2:00 p.m., and next Friday at 7:00 p.m. and I know it will be great entertainment.

Tomorrow, the Belfast Lions Club have their cash draw. It's the 29<sup>th</sup> annual. It's usually a sellout every year. Part of the draw is the Lions make homemade clam chowder. They went out and dug the clams last week, and I know that my husband, included, will be busy tonight making that chowder and getting ready for tomorrow. It's a great community event, and it's a great fundraiser

for a very worthy cause. The Lions give back to the community in so many ways, and I want to thank them for that.

On Sunday evening at the Wellspring Presbyterian Church, Kelley Mooney will be performing. She has a new CD out. It's called *Christmas in the Country*, so anyone who enjoys Christmas music, make sure that you – if you can't attend – you pick up her CD, and she's also from the community from Iona.

I'd also like to echo the Member from Georgetown-St. Peter's comment on the Symons Lecture. I'm very disappointed that the choir, the youth choir is not performing, and I think as he called out to each of us, we should try and urge the Premier and the people who made that decision to rethink it. Those young people got to go to the Vatican, you know, perform all over the world, and it's really our responsibility to ensure that they are the ambassadors for ourselves and for the Confederation Centre, so I am very disappointed that we feel the need to fly in 13 young people to perform. We have great young people here that are very talented, and I just would like to echo those comments.

I look forward to today's session, and I want to wish everyone a great weekend.

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 rise in the House and welcome all the folks in the public gallery. It's good to see the past and present Pages here, that they still have an interest in the Legislature, and the deputy minister of health, I'm sure that our minister could probably use your support today. I told him maybe when the question first comes to him, he should ask for the podium, because he's probably (Indistinct) –

**Ms. Biggar:** We've got his back.

**Mr. Murphy:** I'd like to also offer my condolences to the Jeffery family on the

passing of a loved one up in Alberton, and I'd like to say hello to my daughter Lila, who's off today, and I doubt if she's watching, but you never know. She might be, and I congratulate her on her excellent report card.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to rise today on Friday. We're getting ready for the weekend. I'd like to welcome everyone here in the gallery, and all of those watching at home right across Prince Edward Island.

It's yet another great weekend in the town of Montague. I have the opportunity tomorrow to attend the grand opening of yet another new business in Montague, the Copper Bottom. We have a returning Islander, Ashley Condon, and her partner, Ken Spears, who have spearheaded a new project in Montague, and the business is doing extremely well, so we look forward to that opening tomorrow afternoon in Montague.

There's been a lot of talk in the Legislature and here this morning about grey hair, and I can assure you that the Clerk and I have had a lot of conversations about a lot of things, but one of them has not been about grey hair.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I wish everyone a great weekend.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Statements by Members

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

#### **Minimum speed limits on highways**

**Mr. Dumville:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island to raise awareness to an idea that I believe should be implemented in our province.

Driving too slow on a highway may seem harmless, but it's an activity that causes many people to engage in dangerous activities, such as, passing and speeding to get around people, who they believe are driving too slow.

In the Province of Quebec, and many states to the south highways have both posted maximums and minimums to ensure the traffic is moving at an acceptable speed for all on the road. I think this would be an excellent idea for Prince Edward Island.

I strongly believe that this would allow our highways across the province to be safer and it will make sure, not only that traffic is moving at a good pace, but it will make sure that those travelling with economic goods can have much more predictability using our highways getting their goods to market.

This is a great idea I'd like to see implemented on Prince Edward Island and I encourage all my colleagues in this Legislature and the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy to consider adopting this on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

### **Two Economic Zones for Employment Insurance**

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

I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with MPs and government staff in Ottawa recently to discuss the federal committee's report on employment insurance.

As a result of the decisions by the federal government in 2012, many Islanders are left without income for a number of weeks. Last week, I received an email from a woman in Stratford, who described her situation. I want to quote: We live in Stratford, but have good seasonal jobs in North Rustico. At our age it is not easy to find employment. We're both in our 60s, but work out of necessity. We have no big pension plan or no medical

plan. Life was fine until the recent changes to EI.

She goes on to say: that this year she worked over 1,000 hours between May and November, and was given 21 weeks of unemployment insurance, leaving her short for four weeks. Her husband is in the same situation. He worked for more than 1,000 hours, also, and qualified for 22 weeks of unemployment insurance, leaving him without income for six weeks. This family was left with no income for a number of weeks.

The federal government standing committee on human resources and social development recommended that we review the 2012 decisions. The commissioner for the unemployment insurance commission also recommended that the federal government review the decisions of 2012.

Many Islanders rely on unemployment insurance because we live in a seasonal economy. The 2012 changes to eligibility requirements is creating a lot of hardship for many Islanders. Especially, when there's an over a \$52 billion surplus in the EI fund. This year, alone, there's over \$2.6 billion surplus in the EI fund.

This is workers' money. This should be used to help workers see themselves through one season to the next. It is an unfair policy. If it's an unfair policy, it's wrong. These policies should be looked at and changed, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

### **War Memorial in Souris**

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am proud to rise today and honour the Town of Souris and the Souris Legion. Just prior to Remembrance Day, we unveiled a brand new war memorial that is a beautiful and fitting tribute to the serving sons and daughters of the Souris and surrounding area.

The project took 11 years, but was completed thanks to the tireless work of the legion and its members.

Eighteen hundred Souris veterans are listed on the panels of the new war memorial. This is a way to honour them and share our thanks and our history into the future.

I want to say a special thanks to Legion President, David Perry, and all of his board of directors. I also want to acknowledge the late Waldron Leard for all his efforts on doing the research on all those veteran members.

There are many people who played important roles in making this project happen and I want to thank each and every one of them. Our legion building also had a grand opening after several months of renovations that were greatly needed.

This improved building is a true home for our veterans as well our larger community.

In closing, it was a humble experience to represent the province during the annual Remembrance Day ceremony; the first year at a memorial honouring 1,800 veterans.

I know the Minister of Finance came to his home town to take in these celebrations. You can just tell by the expression on the Minister of Finance's face at the memorial how impressed he was.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Recognition of Guests

**Speaker:** Hon. members, before I move onto questions, I want to give way to the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale for recognition of guests.

**Mr. Dumville:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to recognize Dave Corrigan, Parker Reality. Dave is an excellent businessman in the City of Charlottetown here. He does great work. He flies people around in his plane; young students and anybody that is deserving. He's a great citizen for our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** He's a good brother-in-law, too.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dumville:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know if we should have brought that up.

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

#### Questions by Members

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

#### **Capital Budget funding for schools**

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

As we are all aware the Capital Budget will be tabled later today. It will lay out government spending plans for the next year.

My first question is to the Premier: How many schools in District 11 will be receiving major funding announcements later today?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, we will hear the Capital Budget shortly, very soon. When we've had that presented and when it's tabled in the House we'll all be in a much better position to consider it together what's being put before the House and what provision is being made.

I'm proud to say that this is a very significant level of investment throughout our province and in areas of priority need. I'm quite sure that the people of Prince Edward Island will benefit from what we're about to hear in the Capital Budget.

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.

The candidate in the District 11 who is seeking the seat for the Liberal Party has been running radio ads promising a new Sherwood school, so most people would be certainly shocked if that's not in there today.

Question to the Premier –

**An Hon. Member:** Who (Indistinct) that

**Leader of the Opposition:** – will Prince Street, Parkdale and Birchwood, also, be receiving timely spending announcements today?

**Mr. Trivers:** Good question.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) after Question Period.

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that we'll all be pleased to hear what government is putting forward in the way of a Capital Budget.

I'm prepared to say to the House that it will be a significant amount of investment in this fiscal year and an optimistic outlook looking forward.

That is a reflection of the ability that we have had with the cooperation of a very robust economy to manage the affairs of this province, to have a balanced operating budget and a very big Capital Budget.

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.

We know this Premier is fond of making executive decisions. We saw it with last year's plebiscite, and we've seen it in the flurry of spending announcements since you called the by-election.

Again, question to the Premier: If the Hillsborough Hospital were in District 11, would be seeing a major announcement for that facility today?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I hope we're all aware that our mental health facilities in this province serve the entire province. That we, as a government, have made a very dedicated and considered effort to treat that as a top priority and, indeed, are providing services through new teams, new collaborative teams, working together with community partners, as it's a much bigger thing than bricks and mortar.

The opportunity to have a 21<sup>st</sup> Century whole of province medical facility to treat mental health conditions and ensure the health of Islanders is a great opportunity for all Prince Edward Islanders, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've been hearing from many teachers who feel like the new education minister has picked right up from where the other one left off: Lots of photo ops and the strings being still pulled by the Premier. One even said to me that they believe he's a mile wide and an inch deep. Let's find out.

### **Psychological assessments for Island students**

We have 435 Island students that are waiting for a psychological assessment. A question to the minister: How has this government gotten into such a plight with our young learners?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trivers:** No plan.

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This was one of the first issues that landed on my desk as minister, and actually came up at a committee meeting a few days before I became minister, and something that is obviously important in this system. It's an issue that faces provinces all across the country, and it's an issue that there is not going to be a quick solution to.

That said, I'm happy to say that since I have taken over this role, we have managed to line up a number of private psychologists to do at least one position's worth of assessments this year, which is ground that we've made up over where we were before. I've met with University of Prince Edward Island, and they're starting a doctoral program hopefully this fall. We've had discussions with the Mount in Nova Scotia, and they have changes coming too, Mr. Speaker –

**Speaker:** That's good, thank you.

**Mr. J. Brown:** – and there's more to come.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to ask you a bunch of questions; you don't need the whole Question Period for one answer.

When did you first come up with this idea of training teachers in psychology?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. R. Brown:** He always had it.

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not going to take credit for that idea. I'll say in a very forthright way that when I became minister I had four or five teachers reach out to me and indicate that they'd be

interested in taking the training in psychology.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Levels of assessment for children**

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, are you familiar with the three levels of assessments that can be used to assess our children?

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

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

I do have some familiarity with the various levels of assessments that can be used to assess children in need, and some familiarity with the list of assessments that are required as well, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Teacher qualifications to assess children**

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There is three levels of assessments. There's a level A, there's a level B, and a level C. The level C is the highest level of assessment that exists, which requires graduate level education and coursework.

Question to the minister: What level of assessments are our trained teaching staff currently allowed to conduct here on Prince Edward Island?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, that would depend on the level of training that the teaching staff have.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So that's 100% not true, because I know several teachers that have a level C training, and they're not allowed to do the level C assessments here on Prince Edward Island. No teacher on Prince Edward Island is currently allowed to do level C training, even though several of them have it.

The truth is many of the Island teachers are quite capable right now to do that.

Question to the minister: How many teachers in the system have a level C, that are qualified to assess children right now?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

The answer to that question is that we have met with the college that regulates psychologists on Prince Edward Island, and they have indicated that there's a certain test that needs to be taken to have the skill to do these assessments, and that only clinical psychologists on Prince Edward Island are able to do that. We have worked with Dr. Philip Smith to do our best to identify what we can do, and we've been assured that we're doing everything that we possibly can do within the envelope of resources that we have right now, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister sounds a lot less confident than he did when I asked for the first question

and he tried to answer for five minutes. It's because I caught him. He knows that I know more about it and he knows that he has not done his homework, even though it was the very first announcement that he made.

**Number of teachers qualified to assess children**

Question again, because you didn't answer it: How many teachers in our system right now have a level C that can do these assessments today?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I did answer the question. I said that teachers are not able to do the assessments; that clinical psychologists are required to do the assessments, and that is coming directly from Dr. Philip Smith, who's the registrar of the college that deals with that.

We have certainly looked into that. We've met with Dr. Smith to discuss that. We've had lengthy discussions within both our department and outside of that with the college and the various schools that offer that. In fact we've gone further to have discussions at the university levels as to how we might be able to address that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That simply is not true. Level C is the level that you need to provide assessments. We have several teachers in our system that have it.

The truth is that this minister is trying to hide, is that it's his government that is currently blocking them from doing them. It's his government that's allowing these teachers that have the proper qualifications to do the assessments.

### Psychological assessments for Island students (further)

Question to the minister: How long ago could government have addressed this three-year backlog of psychological assessments?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Action, we need action.

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

I would say that I would absolutely love it if we could reduce this list with great haste.

**Mr. Trivers:** Make it happen.

**Mr. J. Brown:** However, we have a great staff of teachers on Prince Edward Island. We have a great staff of professionals that support all of our students, and they have a huge workload to undertake, and that workload is very specific. It's very complex in the classroom these days.

And so, certainly we have taken the time, and I have met with Julia Gaudet, who has researched this thoroughly. We have met, as I say, with Philip Smith, and we are doing everything that we can, Mr. Speaker, and I assure you of that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Myers:** All right, so thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So here, the other day, whenever the minister needed money to hire more teachers, the minister that's next to him there gave him some of the money from his PNP defaults so that he could hire teachers.

### Private psychologists for schools

I wonder now: Can you get money from him again, and will you commit today – because if you really want these, the backlog, taken care of like you say you do, will you commit today by the end of this school year to hire

private psychologists so the list is zero at the end of the school year this year?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would love nothing more than if I could haul out the money cannon and blow this problem away. Unfortunately, the reality is, we will have a tough time to spend the \$200,000 that we were able to reallocate to put towards private psychologists for the balance of this year, and that's a simple reality of the fact that there aren't enough psychologists to do the work that we need to have done. There are 6-10 a year graduating. We're doing all we can to try and improve that. There's just not the bodies right now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Myers:** A few weeks back, the very first action of this very minister was that he was going to allow teachers to do the assessment. So, what we've uncovered here today is that with a level C, that there's teachers already in the system who can do that.

### Psychological assessments for Island students (further)

There's several teachers spread across our system who can currently do it. Your government is blocking them. You won't let it happen, and I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, why three weeks ago when you mentioned this idea to the media, why did you not already, since then, start allowing some of these teachers who are qualified to do these assessments to start that work today so this big list of students waiting for help in this system, that they can get their help so that number can get down to zero quicker?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

What I would say in relation to this, and I think it makes perfect sense, is that if I could solve the problem as simply as the hon. member suggests, I would have done that.

**An Hon. Member:** Absolutely.

**Mr. J. Brown:** Teachers reached out to me

—

**Mr. Fox:** He won't let you.

**Mr. J. Brown:** — some of them do have that training. We have spoken with the college and universities. We would hope that some of that training might translate into a quicker route through to the certification required, and if that can work, we'll be all the happier to work on different ways that we can encourage those teachers and enable them to take that training and that's what we've committed to do and I've been working on that right since day one and I'll continue to do that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

#### Development of mental health cluster

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week we discussed the urgent need to replace the Hillsborough Hospital with a modern mental health campus to better serve Islanders. As our leader has said, and as we proposed, what we need is a singular focus to raise the bar for mental health services across the board into a mental health cluster.

Question to the minister: Do you see the potential that the development of a mental health cluster could bring to Prince Edward Island?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is that we have already allocated \$250,000 for planning to develop a campus-style model of delivery of institutional and as well as transitional mental health services in this province and we very shortly will be announcing the winner of that contract and tender. We'll look forward to seeing what exactly a campus-style version of delivery would look like.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We think a mental health cluster is a bold response to the mental health crisis touching families and communities all across the Island. A new mental health cluster should be based on four pillars: Service delivery, recruitment and retention, skills training and workforce development, and research and development.

Question to the health minister: Will the replacement for Hillsborough Hospital have the proper facilities to deal with the growing demand for forensic psychiatric service?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, it's great to have the hon. member opposite to talk about some of the concepts, but that's actually the way we are going to be forwarding our information through our contract that we'll be awarding shortly to look at how campus-style model looks at, but yes, that's the whole idea is that forensics — we have a lot of our services in forensics delivered at East Coast Forensics over in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and we are looking at trying to repatriate that back here to the province as well as some of the other delivery of services when it comes to transitional housing and things of that nature — and the institutional component of mental health. We will be seeing what the outcomes of that contract will deliver, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We hear all the time about the difficulties of recruiting and retaining mental health professionals. One reason is aging facilities, but siloed and disconnected services are another.

### **Mental health campus and health care professionals (further)**

Question to the health minister: Will the new mental health campus be structured to allow internships and residencies for mental health professionals in a teaching hospital format?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As when we made our presentation here under some of our concepts of moving forward in the delivery of mental health, we talked about those kinds of concepts, but it would be presumptuous for me as minister and/or the member opposite to outline what the outcome of our review will be.

So once again, we have \$250,000. It's going into planning. It's exactly the kind of considerations that I would have, but I guess I wouldn't consider myself professional enough to say that that's exactly what it should look like. That's why we're going to be hiring the experts and awarding that contract to an organization that will be able to review and research that information and then put those plans in place.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You have to forgive me if I'm a little bit skeptical and a little bit impatient with this. We've been asking this for many, many years and now we're finally hearing that something might be coming. I don't think

it's presumptuous. I think it's bold and I think it's smart that we should be doing this. Being able to deliver a wide range of mental health services involves more than just psychiatrists and psychologists. It includes nurses, therapists, RCWs and many others.

What work has been done to identify positions difficult to fill and what work has been done to develop training programs to fill those gaps?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Henderson:** Correct, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member is identifying that we do have collaborative approaches when we deliver mental health services in this province, that's why we have – whether it's psychiatrists, whether it's psychologists that the member from Georgetown-St. Peters talked about. They all play a role. It could be nurse practitioners and nurses, et cetera. It's very important that we try to make sure that we're collaborating all together – that, once again, we're getting the most appropriate care to the individual, in the most appropriate location, by the most appropriate health care deliverer, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The lack of accurate and consistent data within the mental health system affects the ability to effectively plan and deliver mental health services now and in the future. One of the pillars of a mental health cluster should include a more comprehensive data collection that could be used to fuel research and development in the best practices in mental health that could be applied locally, nationally, and internationally.

### **Development of mental health cluster (further)**

Question to the health minister: Can you think of a reason why a mental health cluster shouldn't have a research pillar and

partnership with our post-secondary institutions?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Henderson:** You're very right, Mr. Speaker.

I wouldn't have a reason why it shouldn't, but, once again, I think that's the whole concept of awarding a contract that was put out by tender. We'll be awarding who that successful bidder was in that delivery of a campus-style model and I like the concept of a research component of this. In fact, when the hon. member behind me in education and advanced learning has talked a little bit about the issue about working with UPEI – I too have met with UPEI to talk about psychology and how we can do a post-doctorate psychology program and training here at UPEI. We will continue to work with all the possible solutions that might be created and I look forward to seeing the outcome of the report, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

### **Binding plebiscite during next election**

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

It's been over a year since Islanders voted in favour of proportional representation. Last year, the Premier presented the deeply-flawed plan for a plebiscite do-over, but since then there's been no action taken on that. In the throne speech, we heard the same plan that doesn't address one of the fundamental flaws.

A question to the Premier: Does he still plan on making the second plebiscite a binding one and if so, how?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the process that we went through last year that was worked and brought forward by a committee of – a multi-party committee of this House. It took us a certain point in terms

of what Islanders have committed to, what we've got to consider as we move forward in terms of participation; in terms of the clarity of what this process will lead to; and in terms of the significance for our democratic system and Legislature and engagement in the future.

There will be a referendum – that is clear – that will be together with the next election and that will be something that we in this House will be able to perfect.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

We still have no idea whether this will indeed be a binding referendum.

The Premier argued that he has no obligation to implement proportional representation because the turnout in the plebiscite was too low – a decision that is quite unprecedented and indeed it sets a very dangerous precedent for our democratic institutions. By this logic, the federal by-elections in Alberta and Quebec that were recently held are invalid and Denis Coderre is still the mayor of Montreal.

A question to the Premier: If the turnout in the upcoming District 11 by-election is not to the Premier's liking, will he be putting Doug Currie back in office?

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh!

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Mr. Roach:** Oh my God.

**An Hon. Member:** Ludicrous.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we are committed to two principles in reaching the go-forward position and what Islanders will choose as our electoral model: One is that it will be clear. They will have an opportunity to make a clear choice and that this will be presented in a way that will enhance and create the greatest possibility for participation.

But let me say, there's a big difference between a by-election that will elect someone to be here until the next general election and changing an electoral model that has been in place for 160 years. That's why we have to be clear and careful and considered and work together and give Islanders – all Islanders – an opportunity to have their say in this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

The Premier and some members opposite me may not appreciate the question, but it's merely the rational extension of the Premier's own flawed logic, where you go to the people, you ask a question, they come back through a democratic process with an answer and you ignore it.

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct) rightly. Forget that part?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** You revert to what existed before.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Indeed, your own candidate, Mr. Premier, in District 11 last night, when asked about why government did not honour the vote said: that the Premier made and I quote, 'an executive decision' –

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh! Oh!

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Mr. Speaker, that sounds less like the hallmarks of a fundamental democracy and more like the features of a dictatorship.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh! Oh!

### Honouring vote of plebiscite

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** A question to the Premier: When will he uphold fundamental democratic institutions –

**Mr. Roach:** My, my.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – when will he respect the wishes of Islanders as they expressed it in the plebiscite last year? In short: When will he honour the vote?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the logic of the Leader of the Third Party changed at about 8:00 p.m. on the night of the plebiscite. The non-binding plebiscite that he produced as a participant in the joint committee, the select committee that was established for this purpose and everybody in this House, and we did it collectively, we did it unanimously, knew that the plebiscite was to be non-binding and that is how far we got with that process.

We will have a referendum that will determine this issue clearly, confidently with the full engagement and the voice of Prince Edward Island voters. That is what we're committed to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** Nothing like the facts.

**An Hon. Member:** You committed to too.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Renovation project at Three Oaks Senior High

My question is for the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: The renovation project at Three Oaks Senior High School is now entering the second school year. I drive by and see gaping holes in the side of the building by times.

Can the minister tell this House what measures are in place to ensure this renovation project does not impact student learning?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We're very proud of the project that is going on at Three Oaks that our government has committed to the reconstruction of that. It's a \$22 million project that is completely redeveloping that whole school and its space. We are progressing on that project very well.

We do take several measures to ensure that it does not impact the students' daily activities. There's daily meetings that take place between the construction manager and the school principal and staff. If it's determined that there's going to be construction in a particular area of the day, that may impact students, then it is rescheduled to a time where it won't impact them.

Those activities, we're ensuring that if it's something that we have to do in a certain area, then it's planned at a different time when students aren't there.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister: Is there an opportunity to do this work after school hours and on weekends to minimize any of the disruptions?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned there are daily meetings and the construction managers are reviewing that schedule on a regular basis. In fact, that has already taken place. If it's been determined that something has to be done to keep on schedule then it is, in fact, and has been done, that work has taken place on the weekend, or it has taken place during times, like PD days and things like that that's not going to impact the students. We are very cognizant of that.

This is the largest reconstruction of that type that has taken place within the school system since – and that school is over 30 years old, but it is a complex –

**Speaker:** Thank you, minister.

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

### **Construction on sports field and school track at Three Oaks**

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, in Summerside, adjacent to Three Oaks is a large sports field and the school track. I see large machinery on this site every day.

Can you tell this House when this work will be completed and when this track can be accessed by the students again?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The particular sports field at Three Oaks complex has not been operational in a number of years due to water infiltration into the field. What we have done as part of this project is tendered out for a new track and field and sports field.

That tender came in at about \$450,000; a public tender, the field has been raised up by two feet. That work is progressing very well. We're very happy to see that it's about 95% finished. What you see now is probably mostly going to be cosmetic around that site. It's going to be a great addition to the sports program at that facility and for all students.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

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

**PEI tourism association and EI for workers**

My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. PEI's three largest sectors are agriculture, fisheries and tourism. All of these sectors depend on seasonal workers. These workers need EI to carry them through the off-season.

My question to the minister is concerning the letter from the PEI tourism association and their concern, also, about workers having enough EI to carry them through the off-season so they can go back to their job.

Have you been in discussions with the PEI tourism association on this matter?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The answer is yes. We are concerned about this issue. We have labour shortages in every industry on Prince Edward Island. We have an expanding economy that is second-to-none in Canada and tourism is no different.

We'll continue to work alongside the tourism industry to create sustainability. It is hard to create sustainability when we have a labour shortage or a workforce issue, such as what the hon. member has spoke about.

We're working closely with the industry and Passport to Employment where the age of people of 55 and over have the opportunity to go back to work.

We created a shuttle service to the north side with the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning. We're trying to do as much as we can to create sustainability in a workforce in an industry that's growing that creates \$450 million in revenue into the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park, your first supplementary.

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

The federal government is now reviewing the situation – the 2012 decision was made by the previous Conservative government –

**Mr. Myers:** They just promised that they were going to undo it though.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Mr. Speaker, this is a major concern –

**Mr. Myers:** Where's Sean Casey?

**Mr. R. Brown:** – the review process is going out. We have moved forward. We have moved from a committee to a report to the government saying they're going to do a review process.

Can you get your department to find out what is involved in this review process –

**Mr. Myers:** Make the Liberals keep their promises.

**Mr. R. Brown:** – to members of Prince Edward Island's sectors –

**Mr. Myers:** Make the Liberals keep their promises.

**Mr. R. Brown:** – can find out how to interject and have their voices heard in this process –

**Mr. Myers:** Make Liberals keep their promises.

**Mr. R. Brown:** – minister.

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, my department will work alongside with our local MPs and try to get them to endorse this issue, and concern. It's a concern for many industries, but it is certainly a concern for the industry of tourism.

Many of the students that I've talked to that live in my own riding, which is considered rural PEI, are having a tough time to qualify for the new federal program.

With expanding businesses trying to create our shoulder season on Prince Edward Island and seeing the growth in our economy, it is a concern and it should be a concern for every industry and I think that we all have to come together. It's 7%, almost 7% of our GDP on Prince Edward Island.

That, without anything else, is –

**An Hon. Member:** Good job.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – an important issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Islanders deeply value their homes and their land. They feel the powerful connection to it, especially since it's passed down to families' generations.

#### **Use of Expropriation Act to seize private land**

Question to the transportation minister: How many times have you used the *Expropriation Act* to seize private land owned by Islanders since you become the transportation minister?

**Mr. Trivers:** Good question (Indistinct)

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's been a number of occasions during construction that we have had to take different pieces of land. Off the top of my head, I think it's three.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What we have here is a minister that loves to go in and seize family land and take it away from their families and their generations that have followed.

**Mr. LaVie:** Shame.

**Mr. Fox:** Question to the minister: How many times was the *Expropriation Act* used to seize private land by owners since you became the minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we're doing a project with construction, we go through a whole process of negotiating first with landowners to come to an agreement. We use any means to come to that agreement, using taxpayers' dollars in a responsible way, and using independent appraisals of the value of that land. If we cannot come to an agreement, we do use the expropriation process.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What we have here is a minister that loves to use strong-arm tactics just to simply go in and seize property.

Question to the transportation minister: How many times do you anticipate using the *Expropriation Act* to seize property going forward?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trivers:** I know one.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our department and my department and my staff have done a great job of working with landowners right across this Island. Down in Mount Herbert we came to an agreement when we had to do the roundabout there,

and we came to an agreement with landowners on what land we would need to use for that, and just as one example.

All across the Island, we're doing projects that require purchases of land, and going forward we can't anticipate how many pieces of land we're going to have to buy. We're doing a lot of work right across Prince Edward Island –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct) taking it.

**Ms. Biggar:** – the largest infusion of infrastructure investment in the history of this province, and we'll continue to do that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Let's get this straight. It's you, minister, that are using strong-arm tactics. Either you take the deal or we take the land from you. That's what you're doing.

**An Hon. Member:** Shame.

**Mr. Fox:** It's my understanding that a new roundabout is planned for Oyster Bed Bridge, and the *Expropriation Act* may be used to gather land in this project. And that is actually being threatened to landowners right now.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh.

**Mr. Fox:** You are threatening landowners. They're going to take their land in Oyster Bed Bridge.

Question to the minister: Will you confirm this?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trivers:** Good question.

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

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct).

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My department works very well with landowners right across this province when we are doing projects –

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) Cornwall bypass

**Ms. Biggar:** We negotiate in good faith with those landowners. We are continuing to do work –

**Mr. Trivers:** Until the courts get involved.

**Ms. Biggar:** – in planning, construction projects as part of our Capital Budget, projects that are asked for by different communities, to improvements for safety –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct) a rush to get here

**Ms. Biggar:** – and in that process we negotiate with landowners, and we have been having great success in doing that in all our projects across PEI.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let's be very clear here. You've ordered your staff to look at expropriating more land in Oyster Bed Bridge, and heaven only knows where else in the province.

### **Ruling on Hughes-Jones Centre arbitration**

Question to the minister: Have you reviewed the judge's ruling on the Hughes-Jones Centre arbitration, or has somebody even explained it to you?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to clarify that we have not been threatening people as people would have – we don't show up on pieces of property and tell people to stop work and threaten people –

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Biggar:** – that they have authority over a project –

**Mr. Myers:** You send Billy Dow instead.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct).

**Ms. Biggar:** But I will tell you –

**Mr. Myers:** You can ask Billy Dow –

**Ms. Biggar:** – that our –

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct).

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) Billy Dow's (Indistinct) –

**Ms. Biggar:** Our staff work with landowners right across this province. They have over 30 years of experience working in the field, and we will continue to work in good faith –

**Mr. Myers:** I've seen Billy Dow's letters.

**Ms. Biggar:** – with Islanders.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Well, Mr. Speaker, let's tell you that a ruling found that this minister didn't fairly compensate, after seizing farmland for the Cornwall bypass, awarding the landowner an extra \$300,000 in compensation, plus legal fees.

**An Hon. Member:** Wow.

**Dollars spent defending expropriation of land**

**Mr. Fox:** Question to the transportation minister: How much did your government and your department spend on legal fees defending this expropriation?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An Hon. Member:** Oh, that's a good question right there.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Any time that we have to negotiate land deals, there's always a legal part of it in registering deeds, in negotiating with landowners.

**Mr. LaVie:** Taking deeds.

**Ms. Biggar:** If we don't agree on what prices are reached at, landowners have a mechanism there, as all do, to appeal that. We went through an appeal with a piece of property. The judge decided to split the difference on what we had offered and what the owner and the tenant of that particular property wanted, and we respected the judge's decision and it applies specifically to that piece of property.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, your final question.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, this minister has a proven record in the last couple of years of seizing land that she wants for her own use, taking it away from families and members across the Island. Minister, you're using an outdated law to seize more private property that doesn't fairly compensate landowners. The judge said: You need to fix the law. Instead you're using it to seize property from Island families, ignoring a judge's ruling.

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh, shame.

**Tabling of updates to *Expropriation Act***

**Mr. Fox:** Question to the transportation minister: Will updates to the *Expropriation Act* be tabled this session?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We are very well aware that the *Expropriation Act* is in need of review. We

are looking at that right now, but when the member across the floor talks about ignoring process, ignoring rules, I would put it to him that he better review his own behaviour by going onto a piece of property under construction and claiming to have authority to shut it down.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) never happened.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Once a policeman, always a policeman.

**An Hon. Member:** Shame.

**Mr. Myers:** What's that make you?

Statements by Ministers

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**National Addictions Awareness Week**

**Mr. Henderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One in 10 Canadians struggles with addiction and problematic substance use, and Prince Edward Island is not immune. I rise in the house today to recognize this as National Addictions Awareness Week. Addiction exists in many forms, affecting the lives of many families in Prince Edward Island. We can make a difference by building positive, caring relationships and being supportive of those facing the challenge of addiction.

National Addictions Awareness Week offers an opportunity for Islanders to learn more about addiction prevention, treatment and recovery programs and supports available in communities across our province. Strategic and significant investments have been made in addiction services over the past several years, and these have resulted in reduction in wait lists and improvement in client satisfaction and service quality.

We have seen 177 youth go through the Strength Program; our transition unit was

expanded from 10 to 18 beds, significantly reducing in-patient admissions to the Provincial Addiction Treatment Facility; Opiate Replacement Program currently serves approximately 900 clients and is offered in four communities across the province with no or minimal wait times.

Just a couple weeks ago we also launched our Opioid Action Plan for PEI, aimed at preventing and mitigating overdoses and deaths associated with opioids. We have also introduced various programs and services to supporting Islanders and families impacted by addiction, including the CRAFT program, which stands for Community Reinforcement Approach Family Training; the Family Education Program; 'Friends Supporting Friends' seniors support group, as well as Family Aftercare Group.

On Prince Edward Island, addiction services are offered as both an in-patient and community-based care. Treatment programs are available for addiction to alcohol, drugs, prescription medication, gambling and smoking.

I encourage all Islanders, if you or someone you care for is struggling with addiction, please reach out for help. We have caring staff who are willing, and wanting to help, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to acknowledge this week as well. There is a lot of good things going on in PEI with the Strength Program, with AA, the transition – all those things. But, we have grave concerns here in PEI with mental health and addictions and we don't need to look any further than the community-based organizations that are cropping up in this province that are doing yeoman's work to help fill the gap that this government has left. We need to encourage them, we need to help them out, and we also need to put the resources there to help us. So those are the

people that I want to commend during this week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

The addictions, of course, afflict far too many individuals and therefore families, and indeed communities all across our province. Most often, addictions – whether that be to drugs or alcohol or gambling or anything else – most often they are a way of escaping what is clearly the painful reality of that individual's life.

In that respect, addictions are not themselves the problem. Addictions are symptoms of deeper problems. That's where we are to find true solutions – long-lasting, proper solutions to addictions. That's where we have to look. We have to look at the root causes.

Of course, this is National Addictions Awareness Week, and awareness is the beginning of that; but we must also come to a deeper understanding of what addictions are, why they are there, why people suffer from addiction, and then of course, to move on to effective treatments.

And effective – we've talked already this morning about the level of anxiety and mental health problems in our schools and the burgeoning need for more psychologists there. That's just one example of the stresses that people are under. Surely the central purpose of all governments is to improve the well-being of each and every citizen in their jurisdiction. That means justice, it means eradicating poverty, it means social cohesion, it means generating opportunities for people to live meaningful lives and to be with their neighbours. That's where we have to look for the true, lasting solutions to addictions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** Here we go now. Listen up.

### **Investments in public and para-transit**

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise today to highlight our province's commitment to public transportation and para-transit services in our province.

I'd like to recognize today Mr. Halbert Pratt, manager of Pat and the Elephant, who is with us in the gallery – and thank you for joining us.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Biggar:** Public transit is a vital component of transportation infrastructure. Well-used, well-designed transit can help to ease traffic pressures, reduce parking congestion and lessen the greenhouse gas emissions caused by daily commutes.

Transit can mean precious mobility for those with physical challenges, and enable Islanders to get where they need to go – to work, school, or a medical appointment, to name a few.

The Province of Prince Edward Island recognizes that helping to build capacity and mobility in our communities has positive economic and social effects that enhance the quality of life for Islanders. To this end, we continue to make investments in public and para-transit.

Through new infrastructure funding announced by the Government of Canada, we have been able to support investments in transit that have helped modernize, upgrade, and improve our current system.

Through the Public Transportation Infrastructure Fund that began in April of 2016, we have been able to leverage federal funding of \$650,000 for T3 service.

That is a total of \$1.3 million investment for Charlottetown, Cornwall and Stratford public transportation.

This funding has allowed T3 to purchase, modernize and rehabilitate 10 buses to improve the safety and efficiency of public

transit and add additional shelters, routing and shelter signage and IT upgrades.

The province also provides a subsidy of \$9,500 a month to go towards operational funding for the County Line Express connecting Charlottetown to Summerside, and communities in between.

I would also like to also recognize the importance of the not-for-profit groups such as Transportation West and Pat and the Elephant for their para-transit services.

Services like Pat and the Elephant and Transportation West are ensuring that those with physical or social needs have 24-7 accessible transportation to get to the grocery store or to church, to get to jobs, family services, medical appointments and workshops.

The Province of Prince Edward Island was pleased to support, along with the federal government, the purchase of an 11-passenger accessible transport van for Transportation West.

Applications have been submitted now, again, by both Transportation West and Pat and the Elephant for further joint funding and I know that we will be making an announcement very soon for more support for Pat and the Elephant and Transportation West.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Biggar:** Investments in infrastructure help support our local communities, our primary industries and our people.

The Province of Prince Edward Island will continue to be strategic, choosing infrastructure projects that help support our province, our economy, and our people.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think we should acknowledge in this the work that the non-profit groups have done in

the transportation industry across the Island, and it's graciously appreciated.

But what we have failed to see is they're carrying the burden, and this minister is not. I hear it all the time from low-income families and also seniors that find it hard to get around the Island to medical appointments and so on. We heard that the other night in Crapaud where seniors are saying how are they going to be able to afford to travel to Cornwall with the lack of rural services due to transportation by this minister.

I know one company in particular that's had a rough go, and they've turned to government, they came to government, but this minister has failed to deal with them, and that's Donna's Transport in the Summerside area.

Rural transportation needs are here, and we need them, and this government and this minister has failed to acknowledge that there is people that live outside the Stratford, the Cornwall, and the Charlottetown area that have access to the T3 program. And that's great that they have access to that program, but this minister and this Premier should give the same level of service to other people in other communities across the Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

Thank you, minister, for this excellent news. The over 40% of carbon dioxide emissions on Prince Edward Island come from transportation. It's the place where we have to look first in reducing our carbon footprint here.

One of many things that we can do to do that is to enhance public transit. There are others; active transportation, carpooling. There are many other facets to this, but public transportation is a critical one, and I thank you for that.

However, I live on Highway 1. I'm in Hampton, about halfway between Summerside and Charlottetown. If I wanted to use public transportation to get to my work here, I would have to drive to Hunter River, which is almost the same distance as it is for me to get into town here, so we have a very spotty public transit system.

Now I realize these things take time, and you have to build them step by step. I'm really glad that we have what appears to be a very well-used, and certainly an excellent service here in the capital region, and that's great, but we also have to remember that many Islanders live in the country, and unless you have a car it's almost impossible to get around, so we need to look further than this.

I do appreciate that there are services outside – The County Line Express and Transportation West, as you described, so we are making steps. There was an excellent study done on public transportation many years ago which I suspect is sitting on a shelf somewhere, but if we want a direction for this government to look in terms of expanding public transportation in an incremental, sensible way, then that study exists. I wish I could remember the name of it, but I cannot.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct).

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Anyway – exactly, thank you.

This is a great announcement. I welcome it, and it's one more step towards where we need to go.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to beg your indulgence today as I'll be delivering a statement on the Capital Budget, so I may go a little longer than I normally would, but –

**Speaker:** Sure, no problem.

**Capital Budget 2018-2019**

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my privilege to rise today to present the 2018-2019 Capital Budget for the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Our government has placed a priority on strong economic plans for our province. It is a plan that is working and Islanders are benefitting. Our economy is strong.

Together with our public service we have prioritized spending with a focus on fiscal prudence and investing in priority areas that matter the most to Islanders.

We are the first government to balance the Budget in a decade.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** The strong fiscal health of our province is allowing us to make significant new investments on modern infrastructure to support Islanders.

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

I'm pleased today to outline our plan that will build on this significant work and improve the lives of Islanders. In the next year, \$134 million will be invested in needed improvements to our infrastructure, including significant projects in the priority areas of education, health care, transportation and communications technology.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. R. Brown:** Progress.

**Mr. Roach:** These new investments will build on the significant work undertaken in 2017 and in 2018. The \$111 million in forecast investments in 2017-2018 represents a \$14.4 million increase over the \$96.6 million budgeted.

This increased investment was primarily the results of the additional cost of renovations in Three Oaks Senior High School, École La-Belle-Cloche and changes to the construction timelines. These renovations will provide students with modern state-of-the-art learning environments.

Investing in health care is one of the most important priorities of our government. Over the past year, we have made strategic improvements in health care and senior care. New equipment was purchased by the Queen Elizabeth and Prince County Hospitals during the year, representing over \$8.7 million with the generous support of the hospital foundations.

The equipment will be used in the cancer treatment centre, operating rooms, ambulatory care centre and the various units throughout the hospitals.

The Riverview and Tyne Valley Manor projects are now well underway with over \$11.3 million expected to be invested in the current year, and completion projected in 2018-2019.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** The total cost of these two manors will be approximately \$24 million. Since 2010, though the manor replacement project, new manors have been completed in Souris, Charlottetown, Summerside, O'Leary, and Alberton.

As I indicated earlier, our economy is strong; growing faster than the region and the country. Our international exports have grown at record rates and our goods are reaching markets around the world.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** Our government is committed to investing in strategic transportation, ensuring the safe movement of residents and goods. During the 2017-2018 year, over 50 million was invested by the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy in bridges, highways, equipment and buildings. These investments were partially offset by federal contributions of \$13.6 million for these projects.

The capital investments in 2017-2018 are already providing benefits to Islanders across the province and we will build on that success in this coming year.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** The 2018-2019 Capital Budget will include new investments of \$134 million.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** This represents a \$37.8 million increase to our previous plan made possible because of our fiscal plan and balanced budget approach.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** I am pleased to announce that these additional investments will allow more timely investments in our schools, and the development of a modern mental health campus for inpatient care.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Biggar:** Check, check.

**Mr. Roach:** The total projected capital plan in education has been increased by \$30.9 million over the next five years, bringing a total capital investment to \$83.6 million.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** Beginning in 2018-2019, new additions will be made to the Stratford and Lucy Maud Montgomery Elementary Schools in Queens County.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** As well as a full expansion of Ecole-Sur-Mer in Summerside.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** This work will immediately address population pressures in these three schools.

Planning will also begin for a new school to replace Sherwood Elementary –

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An Hon. Member:** There you go.

**An Hon. Member:** No (Indistinct)

**Mr. Roach:** With construction –

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) years of that.

**An Hon. Member:** Mr. Gallant (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) you guys just (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** You can't take it.

**Mr. Roach:** With construction –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) that down.

**An Hon. Member:** It's in District 10.

**Mr. Roach:** – to being in early 2019.

In the 2019-2020 year, construction will begin to provide additional classroom space to West Royalty Elementary.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yeah.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** These investments will add \$12.3 million to the Capital Budget in 2018-2019 and \$5.6 million in 2019-2020.

The education budget includes \$2.5 million for new classroom technology to ensure our students are able to fully access the wide range of information that technology provides.

In addition, to refreshing the computer equipment used in classrooms, this budget includes funding for infrastructure upgrades to provide open wireless Internet in schools.

Over the past 10 years, major investments in infrastructure have greatly enhanced the environment for our youngest Islanders to learn. Schools in the English Public Schools Branch have been improved across the Island, with a new senior high school in Montague, a new K-12 in Souris, the replacement of Spring Park Elementary, renovations to Elm Street Elementary School in Summerside, and the new primary school in Stratford.

**Ms. Biggar:** Wow.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** Schools in the French language schools branch have also been improved with major renovations to École François-Buote, new schools at École Saint-Augustin

in South Rustico, and École La-Belle-Cloche in Rollo Bay, and new grades added to École-Sur-Mer in Summerside.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** I am pleased to announce that this budget will allocate over \$38 million for new infrastructure to deliver health services to Islanders bringing our planned capital expenditures in health care to close to \$142 million over the coming five years.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** Our government recognizes the importance of providing quality mental health care based on the best clinical evidence. I am pleased to announce today that we have accelerated plans for a new modern mental health campus to replace the Hillsborough Hospital.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** Planning is underway. The replacement will include several components to provide improved –

**Mr. Myers:** It's been underway for 10 years.

**Mr. Roach:** – inpatient delivery to services to those suffering from mental health –

**Mr. Myers:** Every capital budget (Indistinct)

**Mr. Roach:** – \$60 million will be invested in this project over the next several years. Construction will commence in 2018-2019 of the mental health structured housing component of the campus.

**Ms. Biggar:** Wow.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** This component will provide accommodations for residential patients, as well as an adult day treatment program to ensure individuals are receiving care in the most appropriate setting.

This budget commits to the updated health facilities. For example, an MRI will be purchased to replace the current machine, which has reached the end of its useful life.

The new MRI will improve the quality of images, which will aid in the diagnoses of a variety of health problems.

In the next year, the renovations with a total of \$2.2 million will be completed to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for the dialysis and post-renal transplant unit. The Women's Wellness Centre and expansion of ambulatory care will also be completed at the Prince County Hospital at a total cost of \$6.8 million.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** Construction of the facility and replacement of the linear accelerator at the cancer treatment centre will cost \$7.5 million, with expected completion in 2018. The addition of the third linear accelerator will ensure there's always the capacity to provide radiation oncology by two machines while a third machine is being replaced.

These projects continue improvements to hospital facilities, to provide better health care for our Islanders. In the last 10 years, over \$200 million has been invested in hospitals and manors throughout the Island.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has added a new emergency room, as well as an ambulatory care centre and the cancer treatment centre. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital redevelopment project has a total cost to date of \$89 million.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. LaVie:** Your nose is growing.

**Mr. Roach:** A standalone palliative care facility was constructed to ensure those residents requiring special care are treated in the most appropriate place. Diagnostic imaging equipment has also been added at community, western, and Souris hospitals. Investments will also be made at the Western Hospital to upgrade dialysis, water filtration, and for renovations to the Kings County Memorial Hospital lab to address space constraints.

The Riverview and Tyne Valley manors will be completed to ensure continued high-

quality services for our senior residents of these facilities.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** In 2017-18, the province committed \$46 million to help improve our Island road system. The department resurfaced or reconstructed over 161 kilometres of highway across the Island, and constructed roundabouts in Bloomfield, Mount Herbert, and North River. As well, 17 bridge structures were replaced or rehabilitated.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** Transportation, infrastructure, and energy is planning to spend almost \$53 million in 2018-19 year on improvements to bridges and highways, as well as new equipment and buildings.

Planned projects for this year include continued work on the Trans-Canada Highway extension and a major redesign of the Mason Road intersection in Stratford. As well, 128 kilometres of road resurfacing and construction will be undertaken.

Over the past five years, investments in transportation, infrastructure, and energy have totaled \$188.5 million.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** This has helped improve the safety of our Island roads, ensuring our people and products get to where they need to go safely. These investments are assisting our traditional and emerging industries to get their products to market and enabling economic and community growth.

These investments in bridge and road construction have included the Souris and Cascumpec bridges, and improvements along Route 2 in Elmsdale, New Annan, and Tracadie, just to name a few.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** It has also included investments in a 511 service, and improvements of approximately \$80 million in our trucks, graders, and blowers for our provincial snow removal fleet.

An improvement in fiber broadband Internet access in Prince Edward Island will allow the province to further capitalize on its might, economic, and demographic growth. Over the next three years, the province, through a Crown corporation, will commence a project to develop up to 1,500 kilometres of fibre backbone to improve Internet access to all communities across the province, especially in rural Prince Edward Island.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An Hon. Member:** Just like the one they gave away. Identical to the one you gave away.

**Mr. Roach:** The project is projected to cost up to \$30 million. The fibre backbone will increase Internet speed and capacity, improving economic growth throughout the province, assisting in retaining and attracting new business, and encouraging population and community development. This investment will provide scalable infrastructure for future technologies and growth.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** There are a number of other strategic investments that I would like to touch on. This budget will also continue the fire truck replacement program, which started in 2017-18, which the purchase of a new flow truck and will continue next year with the purchase of a new fire truck.

Investments will also be made in the Department of Justice and Public Safety to improve the provincial integrated communications system, the vital statistics registry, and the court technology management system.

Information technology shared services will also see increased funding to improve critical information systems, as well as ongoing upgrades to ensure our technology systems continue to serve Islanders into the future.

This Capital Budget makes new major investments in infrastructure where it matters the most: In our schools, in our health facilities, in our transportation network, in our homes, and in our

businesses, throughout increased broadband potential. They are made possible because we have managed to get our fiscal house in order, to balance our budget, and provide the means to make investments in priority areas.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. LaVie:** Not working, raising your voice.

**Mr. Roach:** This will allow us to invest in the infrastructure projects that Islanders have identified as their highest priorities, while keeping our net debt to gross domestic product ratio on the decline.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Great.

**Mr. Roach:** The investments in these modern services will provide long-term benefits for current and future generations of Islanders, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct) paid clappers (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** Ronnie MacKinley (Indistinct)

—

**Mr. R. Brown:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** One time he would sit here and make fun of the paid clappers. Long time ago, eh, Rich?

**Speaker:** Okay, order, members.

Before I go to the Leader of the Official Opposition, I would like to recognize Senator Diane Griffin has joined us.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's great to hear all of those wonderful announcements. We've heard announcements over and over again, and

really, it's an embarrassment. It's an embarrassment for this province to hear the same things announced over and over again with a promise: A balanced budget. It took 10 years for a balanced budget from this government. Ten years –

**Ms. Biggar:** You (Indistinct) left it in such a mess.

**An Hon. Member:** Trust us (Indistinct).

**An Hon. Member:** You were bragging about balancing it (Indistinct) doing your job –

**Mr. Roach:** Took a long time to pick off (Indistinct) –

**Ms. Compton:** \$300 provincial-federal investment, \$300 million provincial-federal, if it wasn't for the feds coming onboard you wouldn't have been able to do it–

**Mr. R. Brown:** Federal Liberals.

**Ms. Compton:** – and you're talking about infrastructure spending in education. We just went through a whole process about education and threatening rural communities with education and now you're pumping more money into bricks and mortar. I hope that that is the answer. It's not the answer.

We need –

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** Yes, we need schools –

**Mr. R. Brown:** Oh! You don't want (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – we have overcrowding. We have overcrowding. We do.

**Mr. Roach:** Need bricks and mortar.

**Ms. Compton:** We need more teachers.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** Where are those teachers going? Are they going where they need –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – to go is –

**Mr. Roach:** Yes.

**Ms. Compton:** – is the question.

**Mr. Roach:** Yes.

**Ms. Compton:** And are there going to be more teachers when we have new bricks and mortar?

**Mr. Roach:** Yes.

**Ms. Compton:** Is another question.

Coming from this government –

**Mr. LaVie:** How many teachers did you fire?

**Ms. Compton:** – I remember –

**Mr. Myers:** One hundred (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – when you were elected –

**Mr. LaVie:** Firing 100, hired 40 (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – you were taking 26 teachers away –

**Mr. LaVie:** That's good math.

**Ms. Compton:** – but you backed away from that.

**Mr. LaVie:** That's good math.

**Ms. Compton:** We will keep pushing –

**An Hon. Member:** How much was it?

**Ms. Compton:** – to ensure –

**Mr. LaVie:** You fire 100 and hired 40.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – that yes, the jobs are done –

**Mr. LaVie:** Sorry, you didn't fire (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** Health care, more infrastructure money for health care. Yes, that's –

**Mr. LaVie:** You didn't fire them. I'm sorry.

**Ms. Compton:** – needed, but we need doctors –

**Mr. Myers:** We found the money (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – we badly need health care workers.

Transportation, more money for transportation, yes for roundabouts, yes for the Cornwall bypass. Money that we really don't need to be spending. We do not need to be putting more roads into this province. We have lots of roads that need work. They need to be repaired.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Compton:** Talk about communication.

**Mr. R. Brown:** We put down 50,000 (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** A backbone. I believe we had a backbone. The Tories put it in and you –

**Mr. Roach:** Outdated.

**Ms. Compton:** – and –

**Mr. Roach:** Outdated.

**Ms. Compton:** – you –

**Mr. MacEwen:** Sold your backbone.

**Ms. Compton:** – you sold it.

**Mr. Myers:** You gave it away.

**Ms. Compton:** Gave it away –

**Mr. Myers:** You gave it away.

**Ms. Compton:** – to Bell Aliant –

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. R. Brown:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** You gave it away.

**Mr. R. Brown:** (Indistinct) a string and two cans.

**Mr. Myers:** You gave it away.

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) imagine the (Indistinct) of that.

**Ms. Compton:** Riverview and Tyne Valley Manors. How many times, we probably should search Hansard to see how many times they've been announced –

**Mr. MacEwen:** Hundreds.

**Ms. Compton:** – hundreds, yes. And –

**Mr. Roach:** I'm going to be –

**Ms. Compton:** – how – and yes, now –

**Mr. Roach:** I'm going to be talking to you about Riverview in a few minutes.

**Ms. Compton:** – it took 10 years –

**Mr. Roach:** Can't wait.

**Ms. Compton:** – you had your time to talk about Riverview Manor –

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – I'm glad –

**Mr. MacEwen:** And over and over (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – I'm glad –

**Mr. Myers:** Yeah. Pinocchio.

**Ms. Compton:** – that it is finally being built. I am glad that it's finally being built, but we have heard it over and over again.

Announcements from this government mean nothing. The economy –

**An Hon. Member:** So true.

**Mr. R. Brown:** You can hear the hammer (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – is strong. The economy is strong –

**Ms. Biggar:** It is, yes.

**Ms. Compton:** – and you took credit last year for the sunshine and I'm sure you're taking credit for that again.

**Ms. Biggar:** Finally, some people (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** Catches are up. It's true with no help from you folks.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** Crop yields are up with no helps from you folks, and tourism is up from no help from you folks –

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct) tourism (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – because we had celebrations and we had federal money invested in the province, as well.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct)

**An Hon. Member:** Mother Nature.

**Ms. Compton:** One hundred and fifty years to get to \$1 billion of debt. One hundred and fifty years and –

**Mr. R. Brown:** And you guys did it.

**Ms. Compton:** – you folks, in 10 years got it to \$2 billion –

**An Hon. Member:** Oh!

**Ms. Compton:** – so don't brag about a balanced budget.

**An Hon. Member:** Three billion.

**Mr. Roach:** That's an exaggeration.

**Ms. Compton:** We talked about a mental health campus.

**Mr. MacEwen:** (Indistinct) GDP ratio (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** We asked questions today about a mental health campus. The minister had no details –

**Mr. Myers:** He's not in the loop.

**Ms. Compton:** – the minister of health had no details, but the Minister of Finance has details on that –

**Mr. Roach:** Yes, he does.

**Ms. Compton:** – it's too bad you couldn't have shared that with them. We want to know what those details are. You seem to –

**Mr. Roach:** And you'll get them when we get on the floor with the budget.

**Ms. Compton:** Well, you need to share them –

**Mr. MacEwen:** No, we won't.

**Ms. Compton:** – the minister of health.

**Mr. MacEwen:** We tried that before.

**Ms. Biggar:** Take your time.

**Mr. Roach:** Yeah.

**Ms. Biggar:** Lots of time.

**Ms. Compton:** School –

**Ms. Biggar:** Lots of time.

**Ms. Compton:** – expansions greatly needed. I applaud you for that. It is needed.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Compton:** But –

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct) which is it.

**Ms. Compton:** – please do not do it on the backs of rural communities, that's what I'm asking, okay.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Compton:** Sherwood Elementary School, what a great announcement –

**An Hon. Member:** Is Summerside rural?

**Ms. Compton:** What a great announcement.

**Mr. Roach:** Is Souris rural?

**Ms. Compton:** Buying –

**Mr. Roach:** I thought it was.

**Ms. Compton:** – votes –

**Mr. MacEwen:** (Indistinct) floor.

**Ms. Compton:** – during a by-election campaign. I will caution –

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) district (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – the residents of District 11; it is merely a promise –

**Mr. R. Brown:** No.

**Some Hon. Members:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – merely an announcement.

**Mr. Myers:** It took them 10 years to build that manor in Montague.

**Mr. Roach:** No (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** Ten years to build that manor in Montague.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) question.

**Mr. Roach:** There's no election in Stratford (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** Open wireless technology –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Ms. Compton:** – how long –

**Mr. Myers:** Geppetto won't be happy with you.

**Ms. Compton:** – have students been waiting for open wireless technology? How long? Years –

**Mr. Myers:** Years.

**Ms. Compton:** – and years.

**Mr. Roach:** Wasn't there years and years ago.

**Mr. MacEwen:** You promised it years ago.

**Ms. Compton:** You promised it years ago.

Thirty-eight million in new infrastructure for health care. Great announcement, but where are the teachers? Where are the students that need those teachers? Where are the health care providers that need to be put in the hospitals?

Every announcement you make, yes about bricks and mortar, but we need the workers there –

**Mr. Myers:** They don't want to invest in people.

**Ms. Compton:** – to provide the services –

**Mr. Myers:** They won't invest in people.

**Ms. Compton:** Won't invest in people. We need –

**Mr. Roach:** Got a great plan.

**Ms. Compton:** – to have –

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct) of health.

**Ms. Compton:** – doctors. We need to have health care providers in the hospitals. It's not just about bricks and mortar.

You talked about accelerated plans for mental health, the mental health campus. I would like you to share with the minister of health what your plans are because we'd all like to know.

**Ms. Biggar:** You'll find out.

**Ms. Compton:** It's about bricks and mortar. I understand that, it's the Capital Budget. Please ensure –

**Mr. MacEwen:** (Indistinct) blueprints.

**Ms. Compton:** – that the money you're spending on bricks and mortar is not taking away from providing the health care professionals and the teachers and all of the frontline workers that we need in this province, and we need desperately.

I talked about the fibre backbone – fibre-opt backbone, or the fibre backbone, why are we

not going wireless? Why are we not investing the money in wireless technology?

**Mr. MacEwen:** Yeah.

**Ms. Compton:** A backbone is not going to help remote areas of this province that are already struggling to get Internet –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yeah (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – technology.

**Ms. Biggar:** Ask him why.

**Mr. Roach:** (Indistinct) was going like that earlier.

**Ms. Biggar:** Ask him why.

**Ms. Compton:** We need –

**Mr. R. Brown:** Bradtrivers.com.

**Mr. Trivers:** We need wireless.

**Ms. Compton:** – wireless technology to ensure that all –

**An Hon. Member:** This is the backbone.

**Ms. Compton:** – Islanders –

**Mr. Myers:** You can't put a backbone down every road.

**Ms. Compton:** All Islanders –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) right to the doorstep.

**An Hon. Member:** Yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** Hey, who's going to do that?

**Mr. Roach:** If there's no backbone, where's the wireless?

**Mr. Trivers:** The backbone is already there. He's (Indistinct) Bell already had a backbone there –

**Mr. Myers:** You gave the backbone away.

**Mr. MacEwen:** This government's got no backbone.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Myers:** None of you guys have a backbone; you won't stand up to the Premier.

**Ms. Compton:** This –

**An Hon. Member:** No (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** – Capital Budget is filled with hollow promises. We will wait and see how many of those promises you get to fulfill or that you will fulfill.

Ten years, it took you to get your House in order. Please do not brag about a balanced budget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. R. Brown:** You're calling (Indistinct)

**Ms. Compton:** They don't need to.

**Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Third Party.

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

It's my intent and my hope to give a calm and a measured critique of what we've just heard from the minister.

I think it's somehow appropriate –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct)

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – somehow appropriate that we are getting this Capital Budget in – during Addictions Awareness Week –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – because it strikes me that this budget is the latest piece of evidence that suggests that this Liberal government is addicted to unsustainable levels of spending.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** If we look back at the last few years of five-year projections for capital spending; 2015, it was \$328 million; 2016, \$399 million; 2017, \$494 million.

How sustainable is that level of capital spending. I guess we're going to find out.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** You also have to question the accuracy of those projections because if we look back at the five-year projections, if we go back to 2015 and look at the item line for the projections of what the capital budget would be in the 2018-2019, it was \$64.5 million. The next year, the projection for this year was \$96 million. The next year, it was \$134 million. The projections are – that's more than doubled in two years –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) great.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** You have to question the validity and the accuracy of the projections of future budgets.

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) budget.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I'd like to touch on because my honourable friend talked a little bit about the fibre network. The minister said it's going to cost taxpayers \$30 million in order to install that.

We already have a fibre network –

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – that runs tip-to-tip in this province. It would be like building another set of telephone poles, telegraph poles on either side of the road –

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – an absolutely unnecessary expense. If that \$30 million and the announcement said: every community. Every community will now –

**Mr. MacEwen:** Yeah, we've heard that before.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – that's not a fibre backbone; there are all kinds of communities that are not in the centre of the Island. It's going to require an enormous amount of infrastructure to provide fibre, true fibre-op backbone to every community on Prince Edward Island.

I have to say, having spoken to some of the subject matter experts on this Island, wireless is a perfectly, these days, is a perfectly reliable –

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – and much cheaper – if that \$30 million was spent on improving wireless and making it truly a tip-to-tip high-speed reliable piece of infrastructure –

**Mr. Trivers:** Ten million-dollar loan.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – you would be far further ahead.

**Mr. Trivers:** Ten-million dollar loan, you'd be done.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Enough of the specifics on fibre. We have to ask also, where is this money coming from? Because there are no revenue figures in this budget at all. Is this from increased federal transfers, or is this just increased provincial spending, or is it a mixture of both? We don't know that.

**Mr. MacKay:** They like to spend.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** We don't know that.

**An Hon. Member:** Money cannon.

**Mr. Myers:** Money cannon.

**An Hon. Member:** They like to spend.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** There's a budgetary slight-of-hand, which is used increasingly in other jurisdictions, which is: you present a balanced operational budget, which this government claims to have done, but then you look at the Capital Budget and you see it going deeper and deeper into the red. In order to have a truly balanced budget, you have to have a balanced operational budget and you also have to have a balanced Capital Budget – you have to have both – and I'm not sure whether that's even possible, given the increases in spending which is happening here.

**Mr. Fox:** He wouldn't understand that.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Now, we absolutely need new infrastructure and I welcome the announcements of capital spending. It's

going to take me time to go through this specifically and find out whether this is money going to the right places at the right time, but, yes, we need to invest in infrastructure in order that our economy and the citizens of Prince Edward Island have the best opportunity to reach their full potential. So, yes, there are good things in here.

I am often asked what distinguishes the Green approach to government and politics from others and it's really two values – and they can be expressed in two words: care and respect. That's whether we're talking about for our colleagues in the House here – the respect that we show for each other. It's also how we care and respect for every, single Islander, making sure that every Islander has an opportunity to live a dignified life with all of their basic, human needs met, and care and respect also for spending taxpayers' dollars. That's what we're talking about here.

We're talking about treating Islanders' dollars – because all of this money and the slapping of desks and the standing ovation – that's not this government's money, that's Islanders' money; that's taxpayers' money and we need to know that it's being spent wisely and with care and respect. I'm not saying it all is not. I'm just saying that that is hallmark of Green governance – is that care and respect go through everything.

Of course, yes, we can buy and we need to buy new infrastructure, whether that be fibre op networks, or schools, or extensions to hospitals, or manors, or whatever. We need to do that. We need to buy that, but I hope this government realizes at this point that the discerning and engaged voters of District 11 cannot be bought with announcements like this.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Myers:** Mr. Speaker, point of order.

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

**Mr. Myers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise on a point of order. During the address of the finance minister on the Capital Budget – and as we know, the Capital

Budget has not been Tabled, so no one really has a copy of it – the Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island tweeted intimate details, continually, about what was in the budget, while a member sitting here hasn't been able – well, nobody else in Prince Edward Island has been able to access the budget and I would ask if you would look into the actions of the Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island and see if they broke any rules in relation to Tabled documents – the Capital Budget process here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** I will take that under advisement, Hon. member.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

#### Tabling of Documents

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I present here with a message from Her Honour, the Honourable Antoinette Perry, Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island, which said message is signed by Her Honour.

**Speaker:** Hon. members, I will ask the Clerk to read the message from Her Honour and, hon. members, while the Clerk is reading the message I will ask you to stand.

**Clerk:** Honourable Francis (Buck) Watts  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Province House, Charlottetown  
Prince Edward Island

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Her Honour, the Honourable Antoinette Perry, Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island, hereby transmits the Estimates of Capital Revenue and Capital Expenditure required to carry on the public services of the Province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, and also until the passage of the capital estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Constitution Act, 1867* and the Prince Edward Island Terms of Union, 1873, Her

Honour recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Commended by, Paul T. Ledwell  
Clerk of Executive Council  
and Secretary to Cabinet  
Honourable Antoinette Perry  
Lieutenant Governor

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island  
16<sup>th</sup> November, 2017

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, by command of Her Honour, I present here with the Estimates of Capital Revenue and Capital Expenditure required to carry on the public services of the Province for the fiscal year ending 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2019, and also until the passage of the capital estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that said Estimates be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that consideration of the Estimates of Capital Revenues and Capital Expenditures in Committee of the Whole House be added to the Orders of the Day until such as they are dispatched.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to Table documents to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a written question regarding PEI Energy Corporation and Maritime Electric and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Morell-Mermaid, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I may have to make an amendment on that document. I thought the hon. member was here. If we could substitute in there the Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that'd be fine.

To the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy:

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table a written question regarding carbon emissions in relation to the CTGS units and the CTU units and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Kensington-Malpeque, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. R. Brown:** You're never on.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me find it here. A busy desk is a busy mind.

**Mr. R. Brown:** You're awful busy.

**Mr. LaVie:** Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table written questions to the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. LaVie:** Busy.

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Souris-Elmira.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of the House, I beg leave to table written questions to the Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture, and I move, seconded by the

Honourable Member from Georgetown-St. Peters, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Reports by Committees

Introduction of Government Bills

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Premier, that the 1<sup>st</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 1, adjourned debate on the Draft Address, and it's been adjourned by the hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

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

**Ms. Mundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure to rise again today and to continue my response to the Speech From the Throne.

Last night, I left off talking about seniors, older adults in our communities, and the opportunities that come from having an aging demographic. Many times, we speak only about the challenges that come along with seniors, but there are very many opportunities.

I just want to go back to talk about the grandparents that launched the new grandparents and child care provider program that we announced last week.

Their voices, again, many of those grandmothers had never worked outside the home. They never felt they had a voice until one of them picked up the phone and asked me to come talk to them, and when they shared their stories with me it did leave a

lasting impression on me, and I felt that their voices needed to be heard.

But at that table, none of them felt that their voices would be valued, so we encouraged them to get out there and to tell their stories, and for the first time many of them found themselves in front of a camera, they found themselves with a microphone in front of them, they found themselves sitting face-to-face with the media telling their stories.

They presented to a Standing Committee on Health and Wellness. That is huge for that group of grandparents. And for, at the end of the day, for them to enacted – their stories, their voices, to have shaped a program that was going to help so many Islanders who are caring for their grandchildren, and for caring for children who might be their nieces or their nephews or their neighbours, for stepping up and taking that – we need to thank those grandparents.

And it just goes to show the power that a group of women, no matter what their ages are, what kind of change they can make when they have a government that listens to them, and that is what we did, and we came up with a program that will help them by providing them with \$700 per child that will go towards clothing them and getting them to practices, and enrolling them in extracurricular activities, and the day-to-day expenses that come along with raising children today.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** It will also help with dental, because one of the issues and one of the challenges that they were facing was dental. When they presented to the committee on health and wellness, it was Joan who told about her granddaughter that needed her wisdom teeth out and she couldn't afford it. Now we have a program. We listened to her and now we have a program that will include dental and will help her with those costs.

We'll also help with prescriptions. Many of these children, because they're coming from a home that involved trauma through child abuse or through the loss of a parent due to addictions or mental health issues, these children are suffering trauma and they need prescriptions, and many of them are very

expensive prescriptions, and now we have a program that is going to help those grandparents cover those prescriptions.

Many of these grandparents are also facing medical challenges themselves and health issues themselves. One of the grandparents, as she came into this House, into the House of the people of Prince Edward Island, she was with a walker. Can you imagine that grandparent trying to chase around young children?

So now, with the program that they helped design, we'll now have respite for those grandparents. So she needs a weekend off? She's got somewhere where she can go and someone that can come in and care for those children. We listened, and we implemented a program.

Child care was also an issue that came up when they presented to the standing committee, and when I talked to them, many of them are still working. They're still involved in the workforce. They're out there with their 9-5 jobs, but back then they would have had to pay for child care if they were caring for children that weren't in the school system, and that child care expense would have come out of their pockets. Their hard-earned money would now have to go to paying for child care. Now, we listened and we implemented a program that would help them cover the child care expenses, no cost to them.

**Mr. Roach:** Great.

**Ms. Mundy:** So those children, who many have suffered trauma, will now have access to quality early child care and education, and it will not come out of the hardworking pockets of the grandparents and the other child care providers that have stepped up to the plate to help those children when they need it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** So once again, I wanted to highlight the impact of this program, and this is only a start. This is the first phase, and as we move to the second phase we are also going to help those grandparents and caregivers who right now, if a child needs to go on a field trip, they have no authority to sign for that child. If they need to access

medical documents for those children, they can't, so we've enlisted the minister of justice and his department to help with those.

If they needed an assessment or something for educational needs, right now they can't access them. So as part of the second phase, we will address those issues as well. This is a living, breathing program, and it will continue to revolve to make sure that those Islanders who are caring for vulnerable children, who have had to leave their homes for protection and safety, and have stepped up and provided a loving, caring, supportive home for them, that they will be able to do it, and this government is helping them do it.

I want to, again, thank those grandparents for trusting me with their stories. I want them to know that their stories did make an impact on not only me, but this entire House, and this entire province, and I want to let them know that their voices – they can go back to those children now, and those children can take pride in knowing that their grandparents loved them so much that they raised their voices, and they had a government that listened to them and made changes necessary to provide them with the best life possible.

I also want to talk a little bit more about other seniors in our communities, because as I travel across the provinces and territories and I speak to my other federal and provincial and territorial ministers, we all hear the same thing. We need to value the social and economic contributions of older adults, as well. It seems the only discussion that we seem to be hearing about, whether it be in the press or whether we're talking about it on doorsteps, it seems to be long-term care and what we're doing with our seniors.

Seniors that talk to me as minister responsible for seniors, and seniors all across this country say they're bothered by the fact that that's the only discussion out there, is shipping them away to long-term care facilities, institutionalizing them. They still have value. They still want to be connected in their committees.

**Mr. Roach:** Great.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** At RFP tables, when we talk about the economic contributions of older adults, we also talk about how that connects them to their communities, keeps them healthy. It keeps them active. It keeps their mind active.

There are statistics out there that tell us that more than half of Canadian baby boomers are considering or have started a business before retirement, and that the 50-plus age group is the fastest growing segment of the startup market. Entrepreneurship represents an opportunity for older adults to tap into and build on the years of experience and networks that they've developed, while having the flexibility and control they might not have had in a traditional workforce.

According to a recent global summit on the experience (Indistinct) economy, five years after a business startup, 70% of businesses started by an older adult, an older entrepreneur, were still operating compared to 28% started by younger people.

Some older adults are also looking to do something different that makes a difference and has an impact on the world, creating an opportunity for the development of social enterprises. And for those of you who are unfamiliar with the term "social enterprise" it's a business venture operated for the purpose of addressing social, cultural, environmental, or economic challenges. Most of the profits are reinvested to support that purpose.

Many of the older adults I speak to as well, they dislike the word seniors. They say to use the word senior that describes everyone over the age of 65, that it's hurtful to them. They've worked their entire lives as doctors, lawyers, artists, musicians, carpenters, food servers, but it seems when they turn 65 they become seniors. It strips away their identities. We are who we are. We are a collective of our experiences through our lives, but once we hit 65 we become seniors.

A great example of someone who still has an identity and isn't bowing to the ageism and the stereotype of what a senior is, is someone like Mait MacIsaac who was in the House yesterday. Mait still sees himself as an administrator, as an educator, as an advocate, and right now he says to me: Minister, I have time on my hands. I may be

over 65, but I'm not done yet. I've only just begun, because I've raised my children, I had a successful career, I have great wealth of knowledge, and I needed somewhere to put it. I want to share it with all of you, and he's doing it. And he's fighting the term 'senior'.

Olive Bryenton is another great example. Olive would kill me if I said her age, but let's just say she's over 75, and Olive is a tireless advocate for those older adults. She's working on her thesis for her PhD, and she's out and about all throughout Prince Edward Island, talking to seniors and getting their stories. She's documenting them, and there was – she had an event at UPEI not too long ago where all of the older adults that had come together and shared their challenges and their successes living in rural areas, and there was one woman there that blew my socks off 90 years old, she said she was, and she got her exercise. She loved winter because that's when she got all her exercise, and I thought: Winter, that's usually a time where people get shut in. She says: Oh no. She says: I go up and down the stairs getting my logs for my fire. Living 90 years old; living on her own, getting her own firewood, making her own fire.

Our seniors out there are still connected and they still want to be connected, and they need a government and they want a government that's going to support that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** I have a lot of notes here on seniors, Mr. Speaker.

One more thing I just want to speak about before I go, on seniors, and then I want to bring it back to all of the supports that are out there in my program and how much our entire government does within their departments that supports my program.

But before I do, I just want to – going forward on the seniors' file, I ask that each and every member in this House today hears what I'm about to say, because these are words from seniors. These are things that seniors have told me. They say, minister, we're living 20 years longer than we did 100 years ago, but what are we going to do with that gift of longevity? Sixty-five is the new forty. They want –

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** It is, yeah.

They want us to focus on the opportunities that seniors bring to the table rather than the challenges. It hurts them when we do that. They want us to create opportunities to place value on the contribution that they bring and have made to our communities, our workplaces, and our families. They want us to talk about issues that are important to seniors rather than talk about seniors' issues.

Something I say each and every day, and I do have to pinch myself, because I say: How blessed are we to be the ones to be chosen to be able to make a difference in the lives of Islanders?

As I've mentioned last night and I'm going to mention again today, our government has implemented many initiatives to improve the lives of Islanders, and in our throne speech we show that we are committed to staying on that path as we move forward.

But just to recap, before I turn the podium on to someone else, in our programs, in our social programs, we have a Generic Drug Program thanks to Minister Currie and the department of health that now has over 18,000 registered users. That is so integral to many Islanders that are out there that now do not have to choose between drugs and rent, or their medication and whether or not they eat.

We also have a Catastrophic Drug Program that will limit the amount that a family will have to spend on drugs. We've added additional drugs to the formulary, thanks to the minister of health. Our government has invested almost \$2 million in increasing food rates on Prince Edward Island. The increase is on an average of 5.3 per year, which in comparison to the consumer price index of only 2.8%.

Thanks to Claretta Williams from O'Leary, we can now say that our social assistance clients have had two increases to their comfort allowance, which is an increase of over 18% and an annual cost of about \$500,000.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** And as I said last night, the hon. house leader and member Charlottetown-Victoria, not a day goes by that he doesn't tell me: Minister that was one of the best investments that this government has made. He hears it every day as he's walking down the street in downtown Charlottetown.

**Mr. Roach:** And it was.

**Ms. Mundy:** It was, you're right.

We've enhanced our health care spending, up 5.8%, an additional \$640 million –

**Mr. R. Brown:** That choked (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** That choked me up.

We've enhanced, through the department of education, we've enhanced our education spending total budget of \$256 million. It's an all-time high. We've increased our housing programs. We've increased it by 400,000 to our renovation programs.

As I said last night, that the changes that we made to the PEI Home Repair Program in 2015 tripled the number of Islanders; low-income Islanders who can now afford to make renovations to their homes.

We also introduced the Seniors Safe @ Home Program, which allows our vulnerable seniors – I shouldn't even say vulnerable seniors, shame on me for saying it showing an ageist attitude – but letting our seniors, who want to stay in their home, and are able to stay in their home, make the modifications that they need to stay in their home, safety modifications; moving a bathroom to the downstairs; making a modification to their kitchen.

We also reintroduced the Seniors Home Repair Program, which the previous Conservative government cancelled. That was a huge move on our government's behalf.

We're transforming the Disability Support Program to be more inclusive of all Islanders with disabilities. We have a very active and engaged accessibility advisory committee who are helping us with the transformation of that program. We should be rolling out new supports very shortly.

The bridge model: that was a game changer. That was a game changer and that was something that the opposition, they looked at us and they said: What are you doing? This isn't going to work. But, to date, almost 160 families have been offered assistance through the bridge program.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** The bridge program is a collaborative effort between all departments and government and non-government associations. They meet twice a meet at what they call a situation table. They discuss how they can bring programs and supports and services to Islanders that are high risk. This is so upstream. Many government programs focus on the downstream, and it's what the opposition talks about a lot. It's the more spending and the more spending. If we never get ahead of it, if we never bring it further upstream we're never going to get ahead. Upstream bridge model: forward thinking.

Our new mental health supports, and as someone who has a family member that suffers mental illness, who suffers, these new mental health improvements and additions are going to make a huge difference and they're something that I'm so grateful for each and every day. We will continue with the new facility at the Hillsborough Hospital. Again, it's more upstream thinking. It's not about where we're going to house people with mental illness. It's about helping them be integrated and to blend in with society and feel that they have a normal life. And they can have a normal life.

My family member, when we talk about Unit 9; when we talk about putting them away, it scares them. And when they hear the rhetoric that comes from the other side of the room it scares them, but I let them know that this government is listening. We are doing what's right and we will continue to do what's right.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Great.

**Ms. Mundy:** We've also increased supports to our foster families, who, again, play such a –

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** – valuable role in the lives of so many Islanders. So many young children who have had to leave their homes for safety reasons, these children come to them traumatized and they open up their hearts and their homes. One of the first things I did was to tour many of the homes and meet with the foster families and hear their stories. I got to meet the children, as well.

I attended their symposiums. It's one of the highlights of this job, is to go to their AGMs and their symposiums. The foster families on Prince Edward Island do an invaluable service to our province and to our children and we recognize that, and we increased the monthly amounts for foster families by \$200 per month.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** And increased the clothing and transportation allowance by additional 2% as well.

**Ms. Casey:** Thank you.

**Ms. Mundy:** The new Women's Wellness Centre, again, is something I must thank the Minister of Health and Wellness and the entire government, our entire government, for the support on that.

That was something that was long overdue. It took leadership for this government to stand up and say: this is needed.

Our Be Aware & Get Your Share. That was a wonderful initiative and a partnership between us and the federal government. As I told this story last evening, the minister of economic development tells a great story about a woman who had heard the buzz about it. She had seen it on social media. She had heard about it through people who had gone to the community, volunteer taxing and gotten money back. This was an initiative on our government's part. We approached the federal government and said: you know what? We believe that there are many Islanders, there's many, not just Islanders, but there's many people across Canada, who are not getting the benefits that they're entitled to because, for whatever reason, they're not filling out an income form. We need to raise awareness about it. We need to get Islanders filing tax returns and being aware of how much money there

could be going into their pockets each and every month. What they were missing out on.

When the minister of economic development shared this with his constituent, she went and had her income tax done and she received a cheque for \$3,000 from the federal government. She was overjoyed. She was so happy.

Just within the last few weeks we announced the Universal Influenza Immunization Program: free flu shots to all Islanders. No cost –

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** – that’s huge.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** It was, absolutely.

Something, I’m very proud of, as well, and it shows that we are a government with a heart, is when we opened our doors to 250 Syrian refugees; people who were fleeing terror; people who were fleeing tyranny; people who were fleeing trauma, and they were looking for a better life. Prince Edward Island, our government opened our doors and we said: come here, we’ll wrap our arms around you and you can make Prince Edward Island your home. They are and they’re thriving. They’re integrating into our community seamlessly.

I attended a DiverseCity event in Summerside last summer. I commented on how heartwarming it was to look out into the crowd of people in the audience and to see so many different faces. To see so many different cultures present. That just shows how welcoming and inclusive we are as Islanders and it’s only going to continue to grow.

Another program that was implemented through the Department of Finance and I, my colleague, the Minister of Finance, who is always there to listen when advocating for people with low-income. When he announced tax relief, in 2015, he increased the *Income Tax Act* and increased the value of the basic spouse and child tax credits by \$50 and added a new \$250 senior credit. The income level for receiving the full value of the increased credits was also increased

from \$17,000 from the current \$15,000. Approximately, 12,000 Islanders that year had their taxes reduced by hundreds of dollars and in some cases 2,300 no longer paid provincial income tax.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** In 2016, he also raised the basic personal amount; raised it by 3.8% to \$8,000, but he didn’t stop there. In 2017, he raised it again by an additional 2% –

**Mr. MacKay:** Still lowest in the country.

**Ms. Mundy:** It’s still estimated by these measures, it will reduce the provincial income tax by a total of \$1.5 million to approximately 85,000 Islanders.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trivers:** \$60 a person per year.

**Ms. Mundy:** Again, Prince Edward Island will only continue to benefit by the great work that’s being done in all of our departments and we are all working collaboratively together over here.

On our economy front: our population growth action plan. We have a job creation plan through Vector, WA Grain & Pulse Solutions, MacDougall Steel – they’re all working and employing Islanders, giving them a good wage, letting them go out to work each and every day – and they did it with assistance from our government.

We have WorkPEI, which is connecting people, connecting workers with employers and connecting employers with workers.

**An Hon. Member:** (Indistinct) great private industry.

**Ms. Mundy:** We have the Startup Zone and that’s been a game changer for young entrepreneurs. It’s a place where they can go and they can gather around a water cooler, and they can share ideas, and they can collaborate together.

**Mr. Trivers:** As long as they live in Charlottetown.

**Ms. Mundy:** I’ll go one step further because we’re even talking now about how can we

put a lens – a social enterprise lens – to that Startup Zone and how can we let those entrepreneurs that they can also be involved with helping with solutions to societal problems. So, that Startup Zone has only been active for a couple of years, but that's something that's going to continue to boom.

Our GDP growth in 2016 was the third-best among the provinces – among all the provinces. We balanced a budget for the first time since 2006, and that has allowed many of the programs and services in my department to be expanded and I am so very grateful as the minister responsible for family and human services.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** We had \$225 million in additional employment income over two years: 2015 and 2016 and \$3.3 billion in total employment income in 2016.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** Thanks to the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, 2,800 additional full-time jobs in April, 2016-2017.

Thank you for that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** Positive bond ratings: We're a leader in the country in internal exports. We've seen positive growth in our construction industry, in our retail industry, in our wholesale, in our tourism, in fisheries, agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, finance and insurance, professional services, and goods-producing industries. Prince Edward Island has the strongest fiscal position among the Atlantic Provinces, reporting a balanced budget and a balanced outlook: APEC, May, 2017. Those are quotes.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An Hon. Member:** We're on a tear.

**Ms. Mundy:** We're on a tear.

We have supports for entrepreneurs out there. We have micro loans.

**Mr. LaVie:** Give me a chance to speak.

**Ms. Mundy:** We have the Ignition Fund.

**Mr. Trivers:** That's a great idea that micro loan, great idea. Who came up with that?

**Ms. Mundy:** As mentioned earlier: the Startup Zone. Through Workforce and Advanced Learning – hardworking minister over there – we've expanded the Graduate Mentorship program for jobs for youth, Team Seafood, huge creation of team trucking. I want to talk about, if I can, a minute –

**Ms. Biggar:** You can take five.

**Ms. Mundy:** – about a great program that I want to thank the minister – again the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning – and I want to give the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries kudos, too, as well. Because through –

**Mr. LaVie:** He just shut the mackerel fishery down.

**Ms. Mundy:** – through looking at our – through discussions with –

**Mr. LaVie:** He just shut the mackerel fishery down (Indistinct) PEI as well –

**Ms. Mundy:** – Islanders. We also wanted to try some kind of a little pilot that could maybe work together on helping solve some of the society issues as well.

**Mr. LaVie:** Should be embarrassed (Indistinct).

**Ms. Mundy:** So, we have Islanders – some Islanders on social assistance who want to work but their encountering barriers – there's barriers, it could be life skills, it could be job skills. The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries says: You know what? I'm hearing from the agricultural departments – the farmers out there – that they're having problems finding workers to help harvest. And workforce and advanced learning stepped up to the plate said: Well, how can I help and what can I do? Together, we put our heads together and we came up with the Harvest and Prosper Program.

That, again, is one of the things that came out of this last year that I'm so proud of. Right now, we have almost 50 social assistance clients; newcomers or persons with disabilities who are out there working in the agricultural field.

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** They are receiving coaching –

**Mr. LaVie:** Minister first (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – on life skills and reducing their barriers to reentering the workforce. They are proud. They are feeling encouraged and empowered, and in doing this they didn't lose any of their social assistance benefits.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** They still have their medical, their dental, their prescriptions. We provided them with transportation to get to and from the worksites. We provided them with clothing if it was steel-toed boots they needed and they get ongoing support from their caseworkers and through a partnership with the Adventure Group who is providing valuable resources to this group of people.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** We now have 50 clients who were previously maybe feeling that their only outlook and their hope was social assistance for the rest of their lives that are now feeling empowered and engaged and they've overcome the barriers. That is a result of our three departments working collaboratively together –

**Mr. Trivers:** Or perhaps (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – and with NGO community –

**Mr. Trivers:** Perhaps they're (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – and with private developers, the private industry. It shows that the way we are going to thrive is together working together.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Mundy:** Another great example of what happens when departments work together is

the STAR and the SEAM Programs. And that was a program that was developed, again, with workforce and advanced learning and family and human services and the department of education.

We contacted schools who identified students who were at risk of not completing high school. For whatever their barriers might be; whatever their life experience might have been, it didn't appear that they would be returning to school that September. We said: How can we interrupt this?

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** How can we –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct) falling asleep.

**Ms. Mundy:** – make those children – We're talking about children here. Are you serious? We're talking about improving people's lives –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – I can't believe that. I can't believe I'm hearing that from this side of the room: that I'm putting you to sleep. My goodness –

**Mr. Myers:** No (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – we're talking about children and improving the outcomes of Islanders and improving the overall health of Islanders and empowering them –

**Mr. Trivers:** How about school food programs (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – and giving them a better life –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – or talking about how –

**Mr. Trivers:** That's how you reduce poverty.

**Ms. Mundy:** – when we work together we thrive –

**Mr. Trivers:** That's how you're going to break the circle.

**Ms. Mundy:** – how we work together and thrive –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – and through our partnership with the department of education we identified children.

We identified youth who were at risk of not completing school. We brought them into a program and we gave them tutoring. We gave them mentoring. We engaged them with workforce, we helped them with resumes. They had peer support. We had NGO communities that came in and gave them life-skills training. In the first year of the SEAM Program, every student returned to schools. The principals were overjoyed. They couldn't believe it because when we had spoken to them, they didn't think those kids would be back in school, and they were.

We did it again the next year. And guess what? It worked again. I went to those year-ends when the youth completed their programs. I think some MLAs over there went to the ones that were in their areas, as well. They came back to me and they said how much they were impacted hearing those stories. It's hard to get up in front of a microphone and speak. It's hard to get up and public speak, but every one of those kids that completed that program were proud to get up in front of a microphone and say how that program had turned their lives around.

There was one student, one youth, that when he came up to me after and he told me his story –

**An Hon. Member:** Call the hour.

**Ms. Mundy:** – he said, Mr. Speaker –

**Speaker:** The hour has been called.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Gallant:** I move, seconded by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, that this House adjourn until November 21<sup>st</sup>, at 2:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Have a good weekend.

The Legislature adjourned until Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, at 2:00 p.m.