

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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The Legislature met at 2:00 p.m.

Matters of Privilege and Recognition of  
Guests

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to rise and welcome colleagues back after the weekend, and to the third week of this fall sitting.

Welcome guests in the gallery, and particular to welcome Hannah Bell our newest MLA, and congratulate her.

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

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Indeed, to recognize and acknowledge the efforts of all four candidates in the District 11 by-election and their families and their core support teams. And the voters, who have the way of making sure we are reminded in this House of the truth and beauty of democracy. We congratulate everyone and acknowledge that.

In my district, regular watchers, Parker and Irene Jewell, they have been contributing to this province a long time and special greetings to Parker and Irene.

Finally, to note that today is Giving Tuesday, and it's an opportunity to recognize the generosity of Islanders and the importance to our province and our communities of voluntary organizations, and organizations that depend on charitable support and to recognize the work of Deanna Carroll and Helen Chapman in leading that initiative to recognize Giving Tuesday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

It's a pleasure for me to rise, as well, today and just speak briefly with regards to the events of yesterday and last evening.

I would like to congratulate all four candidates that ran in the by-election in District 11. It was a very well run campaign by all four political parties, in particular, Bob Doiron, Mike Redmond, Melissa Hilton, and, of course, Hannah Bell, who was the victor last night. Congratulations, Hannah.

As the Premier said too, the candidates put their name forward, but a lot of work goes on behind the scenes. The support from their loved ones, family members, but the volunteers on the ground, as well, whether it's canvassers, whether it's people on the phones, individuals offering drives to those individuals that might need assistance to get to a poll. There is a lot of work that goes behind it.

I know the candidates, in particular, are very appreciative, and all sitting hon. members of this Legislative Assembly certainly know very well how hard it is to run a campaign. At the end of the day, it's a truly wonderful experience. I encourage any Islander out there that has ever thought about putting their name forward to do so, and get involved.

I'd also just like to send out a special recognition to the hardworking health care professionals at the PEI Cancer Treatment Centre here in Charlottetown. In particular, I want to thank them for their dedication to the health and wellbeing of Islanders that are suffering a cancer journey.

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 a pleasure to rise today and to recognize some special people in the gallery. Mr. Dave Bagler, who joins us from Ottawa and was a sort of, very central part of the campaign in District 11 for the Green Party. Judith Bayliss, who lives in District 11, and was

also instrumental, in some ways, in the campaign. Before I welcome Hannah, I, too, want to give credit to all of the candidates in District 11 for a well run, well fought, and a wonderful campaign on all sides.

It's a real pleasure and an honour and a privilege today to welcome Hannah Bell to the Legislature. Hannah, who is smart and articulate and intelligent, but most of all she's lovely. I know she will be a wonderful asset to this House. I am inspired by Hannah and I just have such admiration for her. I'm sure everybody in this House, very shortly, will have an opportunity to see Hannah in action and feel the same way.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'd like to say hello to everybody in District 19. I just want to give a special shout-out to a group of women that performed on the weekend at the Bedeque United Church Pastoral Charge. They had a Christmas cèilidh there and Debbie and I, we attended. The church was packed and it was a great two hours of entertainment by these four young ladies and they just did a great job and I just want to recognize them for that.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

I'd like to welcome everybody here today and I'd also like to congratulate all the four candidates and all the staff and workers behind the scenes that worked so hard for all four. I'd especially like to congratulate Hannah. Hannah's a member of the Charlottetown Rotary Club and she had a large hand in writing a new donations policy for us and she got praised yesterday at noon hour, but she wasn't there to receive the praise – I don't know where she was yesterday. But anyway, she did some great

work at Rotary and I'm sure she'll prop the Leader of the Third Party up really well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I welcome everyone back for another week. I'd like to say hello to everyone out in District 1.

I'd like to say hello to one individual I met here yesterday – was Buddy Longaphie. If everybody's having a bad day – give Buddy a call and Buddy will bring out the fiddle and he'll pick you up if you're having a bad day. So, a big shout-out to Buddy.

Tonight is a big event in Souris. Tonight is the Christmas tree lighting. What they have to go along with the Christmas tree lighting is apple cider and, of course, a special recipe by my wife Shelley. They have great sugar cookies from the Harbourview Training Center Inc. So if anybody's looking for a good time, you can get into the Christmas fair just go to Souris and there's Christmas music. It just gets everybody into the Christmas spirit and everybody's in good humour. There are all ages there. There were kids and all ages you want to see. Everybody's chatting and talking and singing, it's just like back in the movies – what you see in the movies. When they light up that tree –

**Mr. Myers:** Your life is like the movies.

**Mr. LaVie:** When she lights up that tree, it's just like the sky lights up. If anybody's looking for a good tree lighting, tonight's the night – 6:30 p.m., Souris.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

As always, it's a pleasure to rise here in the Legislature. I'd like to say hello to everyone back in Evangeline-Miscouche. I wish Hannah Bell congratulations on her victory yesterday and to the other three candidates for their hard work.

I'd also like to make mention: Over the weekend I had the pleasure to attend the Wellington fire department's Christmas dinner and awards banquet and a very dedicated fireman by the name of Gilles Labonté was chosen by his peers to be the firefighter of the year – for all his dedication and hard work. I'd like to congratulate him and thank him for all his hard work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Before I call on member statements, I too, as Speaker, would like to congratulate you, Hannah as the new member elect for District 11 and look forward to having you sit inside the rails.

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

#### Statements by Members

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

#### **Island Honey Wine Company**

**Mr. Dumville:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the Legislative Assembly to bring attention to the Island Honey Wine Company, which is a small business in Wheatley River that opened in July of this year.

Owners, Laura and Charles Lipnicki produce a range of meads and are wine's made of fermenting honey, which is sourced from a neighbor Sheldon Wheatley. The different meads are created from various ingredients on their 56-acre organic farm, La Serena. The farm is the home to several thousand honey bees, as well as sheep, hens, ducks, and a dog.

The couple moved to PEI from Ontario in March 2013 in hopes of finding a slower pace of life and a greater sense of community. I think they found the right

place and they have also found their niche in producing a unique product of the Island.

There are a variety of flavours of mead to choose from, which include wildflower honey, haskap, lavender, and nectar sweet. The best part is that all of the different flavours come from plants and flower produced on their certified organic farm.

Island Honey Wine Company is a fantastic initiative happening in the community and I commend Laura and Charles for all their hard work this past summer and I wish them the best of luck in the years to come producing local and a unique and delicious product is the ultimate goal on PEI and I think the **Lipnicks** have succeeded in achieving this goal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

#### **Rotary Youth Parliament**

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

Over the weekend the Legislative Assembly was filled with students who participated in the Rotary Youth Parliament. The Rotary Clubs of Prince Edward Island led by the Rotary Club of Hillsborough have organized this event for over 30 years.

There were 32 students, including a group of Rotary exchange students. The first thing I do is observe the number of female students who are participating and I'm pleased to say 18 young women occupied these desks.

I was impressed by the students' knowledge of parliamentary procedure and respect for rules of the House. Some bills that were debated included; defibrillators in schools act, wheelchair accessibility act, school board elections act and the carbon tax act, to name a few.

An interesting motion, which was led by international exchange students was called, the price you see, price you pay. The member representing Charlottetown-Lewis Point, Cassidy Byrne from Colonel Gray did

a formidable job on increasing women's clinics.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to your team and the team from the Clerk's office who ensured the success of the youth parliament. Their contribution gave the students an authentic experience of being a member of the Legislative Assembly.

Also, a thank you to the teachers who continue to dedicate their time to instill in their students a respect for democracy and are often the first point of contact to introducing young adults to the world of politics.

Frank Zakem had a dream of a youth parliament over 30 years ago. I'm pleased his son, Albert, and the Rotary Clubs are continuing that dream.

Each year the Frank Zakem Young Parliamentarian Award is given to the student who makes an outstanding contribution to the youth parliament and this year it was presented to Josie Green from KISH, who was the leader of the opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Relocation of Cornwall Doctor**

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

I rise today to bring public attention to an issue of great importance for my constituents. A family doctor, currently based in Crapaud is relocating to Cornwall with the blessing of this government.

His departure means the communities of Crapaud, Borden-Carleton, Victoria, Kinkora, Tryon, Albany, Hampton, Augustine Cove, DeSable, Bonshaw and all other areas of the South Shore region will no longer have access to public health care services.

Preserving and maintaining local access to health care services is a priority for my residents. An issue we believe and live through with Dr. Cusack closing his practice

in Borden-Carleton, causing us to lose a staple of the town and the area.

This is further reflected in the fantastic turnout at a community meeting held two weeks ago. Local residents have organized themselves and together, everyone is in agreement that this vacancy must be filled by a doctor or a nurse practitioner immediately.

There is a petition circulating that I encourage everyone to sign in the South Shore region. I know the importance of maintaining local access to services. This erosion of rural PEI is alarming and must be halted. I have met with the health minister on this issue and will continue to advocate for my constituents alongside the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

The residents of South Shore region are working collaboratively and are offering positive solutions. We need this government to be a willing and equal partner to immediately fill this vacancy.

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

Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

### Questions by Members

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

### **Review of Provincial Nominee Program**

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

Once again, this government's mismanagement of the immigration policy has made national headlines, highlighting questionable policy decisions and business practices within the Provincial Nominee Program.

This situation cannot be allowed to stand.

Question to the Premier: When will a full-scale top-to-bottom review of your government's Provincial Nominee Program begin?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, to start the total immigration programs of our province, a part of which is the Provincial Nominee Program, have been very successful and successful by comparison with those elsewhere in the region and nationally, to the point where Prince Edward Island led the country in population growth in 2016-2017, with 1.7% growth in the population, that compares with 1.2% for the country. We intend to continue building on that success.  
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.

This is twice now in the last number of years where national and even international news has been made by this government and how it runs the PNP program.

Question to the Premier: How did you let things get to this stage a second time?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, there was a feature in the *Toronto Star* on the weekend that, in fact, centered on the success of Prince Edward Island's immigration programs in the Atlantic context where we are indeed leading the way. We are committed and have been committed all along and that's the nature of good public administration to constantly upping our game to improving how we're going about things, to addressing problems.

We're also committed to ensuring that when we speak about and when let people know about our immigration programs that we're using current information and I'm proud to say, that that includes a significant improvement in the retention of people who come here through our immigration streams.

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.

Prince Edward Island has a lot to offer prospective immigrants looking to build a better life, raise their families, and start a business. The many positives that our province has to offer, risk being outweighed by this government's mismanagement of the PNP program.

**Protection of reputation globally for immigration**

Again, question to the Premier: What's being done to protect PEI's brand reputation, globally as a safe, attractive location for immigration?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I think that starts with all of us, acknowledging the importance in immigration, the contributions people make economically, culturally – in terms of the voluntary sector, and civic leadership.

Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition and I attended an event on Sunday night with the consul from Lebanon to Eastern Canada where that was celebrated, the room was full, there was a great meal for everyone and we acknowledged that we've had two premiers from the Lebanese community, we have had a mayor of Charlottetown, we've had many councillors, we had leaders on our business community and in our community-based organizations and that's how we approach immigration and how we approach the growth and success in our community.

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 story that is actually emerging from this investigation is of a climate where government is encouraging prospective immigrants that Prince Edward Island is a fast track to citizenship – if you don't mind

parting with a large chunk of money along the way.

Question to the Premier: Why is your government encouraging prospective immigrant entrepreneurs to side-step the rules?

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no side-stepping the rules. The fed-prov-territorial – the feds are very well aware of the processes that are in place. We consult with them routinely. Immigration over the past number of years has really been a success for Prince Edward Island and we hope that it continues. We'll do everything in our power to ensure that the population growth – which the opposition continues to talk about rural PEI. We've made some changes to the program in the last three months that are going to be very effective for rural Prince Edward Island. We want this to grow. It's a good thing for Prince Edward Island, it's a good thing for the economy of PEI and we want it to continue and the population growth is so important with the aging demographic that we have on PEI.

Thank you.

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

### Immigration process for PEI

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

It seems like two stories are being told here. When government talks about immigration to Islanders it talks about population growth and how much money is being taken in. When government talks about immigration to newcomers, it talks about how to get around the rules and minimum legal requirements.

Again, question to the Premier: Why is your government telling one thing to Islanders and a different thing to newcomers when it comes to immigration?

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

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

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

There's several streams that immigration is provided through the Province of Prince Edward Island and the federal government and one of those streams is labour. Just a quick note on labourers – we've taken in over 600 people to fill labour gaps across PEI and that's from our fish processors to our farmers, to our scientists, to our doctors and we'll continue to do that because it's a very important role for PEI to fill those gaps on Prince Edward Island that are a basic need for our survival as a small Island and to grow the population.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Again, there are two stories being told by government here. The story that government is telling prospective newcomers and then the story that this government's main concern is about the money.

### Long-term immigration policy for PEI

Question to the Premier: How is it that being addicted to forfeited deposits is going to build a successful, long-term immigration policy for PEI?

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I believe the stream that the hon. member is talking about is the economic stream. There is an obligation for anybody that wants to come to Prince Edward Island and one of those obligations is opening a business – opening a business on Prince Edward Island within a year of arrival. I can tell that if you look around the Charlottetown area, or across the Island, if

you look even in Point Prim, for example – I just read the other day that there was a farmer working there. There's a farmer in Brookfield. There's all kinds of successful stories of immigrants and we can't paint immigrants all with the same brush. It's unfortunate that this happens and I hope the opposition realizes that the importance of immigration on Prince Edward Island is only going to be to our success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, under the current rules, a nominee is only required to operate a business for one year. Most new businesses take about three years to find out whether they are viable.

#### **Program rules for nominees**

Question to the Premier: When will the program rules change to require nominees to operate a business for a minimum of two or more years?

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

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

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

There's other avenues as well that the hon. Member is not mentioning. If you talk about – they have to present themselves to the immigration office within 30 days, they have to invest a minimum of \$150,000 in their business, they have to incur \$75,000 worth of expenses, submit financial statements that are audited by a certified professional accountant. There's checks and balances in here and we work with the immigrants as much as we can, but it's not only us –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacDonald:** – that works with the immigrants and the businesses, it's the chamber of commerce, it's Island Advance, it's PEI Connectors, it's settlement services, there's a whole gamut of individuals and

associations that are working with the success of these businesses.

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.

There are some checks and balances put in place, but upwards of 80% of these newcomers that are coming through this stream, are actually forfeiting their deposits because they're simply coming through to buy their citizenship.

Over the past two years, this province has taken in \$27 million in forfeited deposits from the Provincial Nominee Program. A growing number of Canadian provinces are moving away from using this deposit system for their immigration programs. New Brunswick and Saskatchewan are two examples.

#### **Long-term immigration policy for PEI (further)**

Question again to the Premier: When will your government move away from the current deposit system to a system that actually focuses on retention of immigrants on Prince Edward Island, versus just having them come through to fast-track and get the permanent residency and leave?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, we've heard several times about rural development across Prince Edward Island and how we establish a foundation to make those communities viable and sustainable going forward. We've just changed our expression of interest model, as far as the intermediaries. We signed up 12 intermediaries and we're changing the rules and regulations. We want quality over quantity. We're not going forward with the old program. We've made changes already in answer the hon. Member's question and we'll continue to make changes and review the program on an annual basis. Whatever

we feel best suits Prince Edward Island, that's what we'll do.

Thank you.

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

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

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

We need action on immigration that encourages people to not only move here, but to live here, raise their families, create new jobs, and stay here.

### **Number of people in PNP program residing on PEI**

Question to the minister responsible for immigration: How many people who came to PEI under the PNP program since 2015 are still here?

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

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

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

I just mentioned the expression of interest and what we've gone through with the new intermediaries which was a transparent RFP, which was online; the scores, the whole nine yards and we can't do it any clearer. We've taken the opposition and invited them to sit before our employees that run this program in Prince Edward Island to ensure that everything is above board and upfront.

We are making changes to the program. We want to build on this. We know how important this program is to Prince Edward Island, and we're not going to stop to continue to that because we know that the issues relevant to immigration are extremely important to the people of PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Number of PNP businesses still open**

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

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

The minister didn't even make an attempt to answer my question. He didn't say he'd bring back information. I'm not even sure if he knows. We think there's a problem retaining immigrants through the PNP program here on Prince Edward Island. The point of the business ownership stream of the PNP is to create more viable, long-term businesses that help grow our province.

A question to the minister: Since 2015, how many new businesses opened by nominees are still in operation?

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

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

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

Based on the Stats Can relevancy of 2015, from 2014 because it's always a lag time as the opposition is well aware of, we're at 63% of those in retention rate right now on Prince Edward Island.

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** But, it goes beyond that.

If you have to look at one end of the Island to the other and see the businesses that are opening up, and they're not just businesses of immigrants. They're creating families. They're creating sustainability in those communities.

We just went through a school process. We're trying to build the population. We're reaching out to intermediaries areas in rural PEI; that was part of their criteria. We're very focused on immigration, and we're going to continue to focus on immigration because it is important.

Thank you.

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

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

**PNP deposits going to government coffers**

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

Despite what the minister says, I know over here in the official opposition we're not getting any warm and fuzzies. In fact, it gets worse. In fact, more than half of nominees that were supposed to open a business never even attempted to meet this requirement. Obviously this doesn't meet the goals of the program. Of course, when nominees don't meet these goals, they forfeit \$150,000 deposit straight in the government coffers.

A question to the minister: Is the PNP set up this way simply so it can be a cash-grab for your government?

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

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

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

It's extremely important, and to answer the honourable's questions: No. I'd be the first one to say that we do not like keeping any of those allocations through those immigrants when they come here. But, I can say this: They do come here. 96% in the last year, we refunded their residency portion of their immigration fees to them.

What's that saying? It's saying that they're living here on Prince Edward Island.

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacDonald:** They're utilizing our services, and we're providing a service to them and we'll continue to develop this program and work with this program –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacDonald:** – with fed, prov and territorial program that has been very successful and will be very successful.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Myers:** It's all fake and you know it.

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

**Number of PNP businesses still open (further)**

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

It's funny that the minister comes up with these numbers because officials from the minister's department have told the national media that only 92 out of 296 nominees open businesses, and that only two-thirds of those businesses stayed open past the first year. So out of nearly 300 nominees, only about 20% still have businesses operating after one year.

Question to the immigration minister: If only one out of five provincial nominees immigrating under a business stream are running businesses locally after one year, do you consider that a problem?

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

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

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

I think if you look at the overall picture of immigration and what it's done to Prince Edward Island – if you look at retail sales. We just had a home building supply store reach \$30 million in sales for the first time ever in the history of Prince Edward Island.

Cars sales; housing starts – there's all kinds of things; manufacturing, which a lot of these immigrants may work in this field until they're successful in their business. In fact, there's one that purchased a business in the Cavendish area that actually work in the manufacturing plant in Charlottetown in the off-season. That's what builds a community. That's what we're doing, and it's unfortunate that the opposition wants to focus on the doom and gloom, but you know what? On this side of the House, we're focused on growing the economy because when we grow the economy, we get to reinvest into health care, into schools and into social programs.

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

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

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

### **Follow-up with PNP immigrant businesses**

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

This is another question for the minister of immigration. Minister: If a PNP nominee chooses not to open a business it means that, indeed, they have no financial statements to audit, is it true that there's absolutely zero follow-up done with them to try and get them to open a business and you just take the money and put it right in your account?

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I'm glad to provide the information to the hon. member because, no, if they come back in two or three years and decide to open a business then we're standing right beside them and we'll refund the escrow amount, Mr. Speaker, in that amount.

Thank you.

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

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

### **Supports for immigration in rural PEI**

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

For some time now, we have suggested over here in the official opposition that focused immigration holds promise for rural development on Prince Edward Island. Recently, it's good to see the government has indicated an eagerness to explore this opportunity.

A question to the Minister of Rural and Regional Development: What new programs or supports are being brought forward to make sure that immigration can be a boost for rural Prince Edward Island?

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

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

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

Finally, I got a question. We work closely with the –

**Mr. Trivers:** Hopefully, there will be an answer.

**Mr. Murphy:** – economic and tourism and advanced learning and the interesting thing is that the new agents that were recently announced are going to have a great impact on rural Prince Edward Island because instead of being located in the City of Charlottetown, they actually are out in rural PEI. They're in Alberton, Tignish, O'Leary, Souris –

**Mr. Myers:** One's the Premier's neighbour (Indistinct)

**Mr. Murphy:** – Montague and they work – they'll be working closely with the communities to make sure that we do get our fair share of immigration in rural Prince Edward Island.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Problems with Provincial Nominee Program in rural areas**

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

The feedback that we're receiving from Islanders and, indeed, that the national media is receiving shows that there are some problems with the Provincial Nominee Program.

This is a question to the Minister of Rural and Regional Development: What are you doing to make sure that the problems being faced with the Provincial Nominee Program won't be repeated in rural Prince Edward Island?

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

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

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

Very interesting enough, we've had 13 communities, and one in the hon. member's own riding, with the mayor of Rustico. They want the business labour and express entries coming through there because they know what it does to their communities.

We're going to stay on top of this with the new expression of interest, whereas before we had first-in-first-out, we're done of that. We told the intermediaries we're going to be very choosy in regards the applicants that they put forward. We want to work with quality over quantity and that's what we intend to do. Some of the intermediaries may not be happy with this process. We're not making allocations. We are going to be decisive on the individuals that come, and if it's someone in Summerside that needs someone or someone in Rustico, or someone in Point Prim then, Mr. Speaker, that's what we're going to focus on.

Thank you.

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

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

### **Long-term success and improvements to PNP**

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

Here in the official opposition we like to look long-term. We want to make sure that our immigration policy and the results that it brings will benefit Prince Edward Island in all of the years to come, not just be a bubble that brings in some money now, and then it's gone.

A question to the minister of immigration: What are you doing to fix the PNP program to ensure that it brings long-term success and improvements to our economy?

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** We started with 12 new intermediaries. We contacted 13 communities. We're dealing with them and they're very interested in working with us. We're doing everything possible as far as Island connectors, Island advance, working with chambers in commerce. We set-up an office in Summerside. We're setting up an office in Montague. We're doing Island tours of businesses that immigrants may be interested in.

There's all kinds of stuff. We're bucking the trend at the university with foreign national students – of the rest of the universities in population base, and we're increasing. We're working with them, as well as –

**Mr. Myers:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. MacDonald:** – our post-secondary. We're doing everything possible to make this a sustainable future for immigration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Witnesses to testify about PNP at committee**

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

Islanders have many questions about the PNP program, and some of these potential problems; how it works, who is benefits, whether it's going to work long-term.

This is a question to the Premier: Premier, will you ask the Liberal members to put a motion forward to bring witnesses to testify about the PNP program at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal members on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm sure, can have their own view on this –

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

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – that’s the whole purpose of standing committees of the Legislature and I’m sure that’s well known to the hon. members opposite and that’s the experience.

Let me come back to what we said all the way through here: immigration is working. We’re working on retention and changing that track record. That improvement is evident. You can go to your district, to the district of the Member from Rustico-Emerald and see what’s going on in business succession in Cavendish, for example. You can see it. It’s moving further west. That’s what we’re doing and we’re going to keep doing it through this intermediary program. We’re proud of it, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

### **Municipalities that cannot comply with new Municipal Government Act**

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

I know government is making significant efforts to help communities transition to the new *Municipal Government Act*. But many small municipalities will still not be able to meet the requirements of the MGA.

They are therefore left with two choices; either dissolution or amalgamation. Some of them are refusing to even consider amalgamation.

A question to the Minister of Rural and Regional Development, it doesn’t rain but it pours, minister: Will rural municipalities be dissolved if they cannot comply with the act?

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) going to answer this one? He’s looking over.

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

**Speaker:** The –

**Mr. Murphy:** I’ll do my best to answer that one. I would say: No. That would be the

community’s choice if they wanted to dissolve or not.

I think our minister responsible for communities has been very clear that there’s going to be no forced amalgamation in the province. He already made a few concessions on the MGA, and I think one of the concessions that was made is that the smaller communities, when it comes to the 20 hours that they can work with neighbouring communities to provide those 20 hours of community administration work.

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

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

### **Loss of municipalities affecting rural communities**

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

Rural governance has been on the backburner for many governments since the urban municipal reforms back in the 1990s. It seems that changes finally are coming.

The Minister of Communities, Land and Environment has, indeed, said that he will not force amalgamation, which means, that of the two choices, then dissolution will likely be the future of many small rural municipalities. As a former mayor, rural mayor, minister, the Minister of Rural and Regional Development knows the value of local governance in rural Prince Edward Island.

A question to the minister, again: How will the loss of municipalities negatively affect rural communities on Prince Edward Island?

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

**Mr. Mitchell:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

It’s certainly – thank you for the question hon. member.

As you and I have had many discussions on this particular issue in the past. Obviously, I have spoken, as minister handling this file, that I will work with municipalities to

identify other municipalities that they can work with for shared service.

This has been established in other meetings that I have been having with municipal leaders all across Prince Edward Island. I do understand that there are challenges and we will help those municipalities to overcome them and work with other areas in their neighbourhoods.

Thank you.

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

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

### **Municipal reform agenda of CLE and RRD**

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

The Minister of Rural and Regional Development belatedly published mandate letter is strongly focused on collaboration with other departments.

Municipal restructuring, whether one is for or against it, is seen by many as a critical factor in the future of rural communities.

Question to the Minister of Rural and Regional Development: What is your department doing to contribute to the municipal reform agenda of communities, land and environment?

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

**Mr. Murphy:** Well, we work closely with the minister, as I do with all my colleagues here on this side of the House. I might also stress that, as you're well aware of, I do sit on the communities, land and environment committee, and we're currently entertaining presentations from municipal leaders on that particular subject.

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

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

### **Vacant Summerset Manor**

**Mr. Palmer:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Family and Human Services: The Summerset Manor in Summerside, has been sitting idle since residents moved to the new manor. This vacant building was a significant issue for the residents in the area during the last election in Summerside.

### **Plans for vacant Summerset Manor**

Can the minister inform the House what the plans are for the old manor building?

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

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

This indeed is a property that has caused, I guess, issues for both the member opposite and myself as we are both MLAs for the city of Summerside. It goes even back further to my days on city council where it was an issue and it was something that our phones would be ringing off the hook: What is the province going to do with the old manor?

One of the first things I did when I took on this ministry, was start to look in to: what are we going to do with the old manor. We reached out to all of the departments within government to see if there was any interest in the building, in the property and if so, what would we do with it. They have since come back and they say they have no interest, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Minister, is the department going to deem this building surplus and have it used for another use?

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

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

The next step in the process would be to reach out to community groups to see if

there was an interest in purchasing the building and redeveloping it. Actually, in the fall of 2016, government did put out request for proposals to see if there were interested parties interested in coming in and doing a redevelopment. There was lots of interest; there was lots of touring of the building and the property but nobody actually did the call for the request for proposal. We are now going internal and seeing what else we can do, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Minister, since no one has submitted a proposal on this building, will the department be able to decommission the building and possibly move to the next steps?

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

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

Actually, in the next couple of weeks we will be issuing a request for proposal again; this time, tying the Summerset Manor and the property to the request for proposal looking for developers to show their expression of interest in developing 20 new seniors units on that property. We're looking forward to partnering with municipalities, developers, to create new affordable housing options and taking advantage of this great location. We also, as of early as yesterday, I had a very positive meeting with the city of Summerside moving forward and looking at collaborating around affordable housing issues.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**Housing strategy for Charlottetown**

I was extremely impressed by the National Housing Strategy announced last week by the federal government and Justin Trudeau's commitment that housing is a basic human right, which I believe in, and we all should all work for housing for everyone.

According to the new strategy there could be up to 500 new units built on Prince Edward Island. I'm just wondering what the department of human services is doing to identify properties in order that we could move these properties to the housing corporation to build housing on these properties?

We did that when I was on city council and you will see a number of duplexes around the city built because of us giving properties over to the housing corporation and they built affordable housing for people here in Charlottetown. It was a good idea then; I think it's even a better idea now.

I'm just wondering what the department is doing to identify such properties provincially that could be used in housing?

Thank you.

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

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

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

The hon. member is absolutely right. In the past we have identified provincial pieces of land and we've partnered with communities such as Cornwall and Charlottetown in building affordable units for persons with disabilities and persons with intellectual disabilities. We are currently in the process of discussing with our colleagues in the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy about identifying other parcels of land within the province and formalizing a process on a go-forward basis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Also in the housing strategy, the federal government has identified that they're willing to turn over federal properties for housing, which is a great idea. They have allocated over \$200 million to this effect. I'm just wondering, again; we don't want to house low income all in one place. Distribute them throughout the city. It was a great project and there's a lot of good housing throughout the City of Charlottetown.

I'm just wondering what her department is doing in order to identify federal land, also, that could be used for housing; 500 units would go a long way for helping a lot of families here on Prince Edward Island.

Thank you very much.

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

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

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

Yes, again, another great idea and one that we have acted on in the past. We have partnered with our federal partners, and NGOs, in the past to allocate federal surplus lands for affordable housing projects across Prince Edward Island.

On a provincial level, housing services is always, again, looking for ways that we can collaborate with municipalities, with communities, with developers for long-term solutions including surplus lands to address the growing housing needs on Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

### **Concerning experience of PNP immigrants**

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

Our PC team has been contacted directly by immigrants whose experience are both concerning and alarming.

**Minister:** Why is money, and not people, what this government values most in immigration?

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

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

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

We value immigration and we have different streams of immigration, and we'll continue to grow the immigration program and I know that there's (Indistinct), is an Egyptian actually from Point Prim that's operating a farm. Those are the type of immigrants that this province wants and needs in our rural communities, and we'll continue to build on that going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Abuses and fraudulent activity in PNP**

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

We realize there are some great immigrant stories, and that's not what we're questioning here. According to immigrants and the national media, the word is out on PEI: The rules apparently do not apply.

**Minister:** Why is this government allowing abuses and fraudulent activity to occur with immigration programs that you are administering?

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, I read the articles and the first thing I did was called my staff and the second thing I did was set up meetings with post-secondary institutions, the Chinese association, Island connectors, and settlement services.

We wanted to know, because we were surprised by some of those accusations –

**Mr. Myers:** How could you be surprised? They're calling us. They're not calling you?

**Mr. MacDonald:** – too, and secondary – but there are. We need these individuals to come forward. We have a web portal now that we have set up where they can anonymously go on there and claim what issues that they do have.

We will stand behind these individuals and I'm standing here before this House today and if there's anybody breaking the law as far as immigration, we will stand behind the individuals that bring it to us and if there's something that we need to do further, then we're willing to do it as a government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Immigrants leaving PEI for Toronto**

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

We want to see people go through the program and follow the rules. Overseas recruiters are telling perspective immigrants what province is the fastest and which is the cheapest, and many times it's Prince Edward Island. One phrase that I have heard personally: Money on paper, and then collect EI in Toronto.

Minister: Why does this government approve of immigrants parking mandatory money in PEI and then hopping the next flight to Toronto?

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

**Mr. Myers:** Good question.

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member wasn't listening to me in the first set of questions that I had that we've changed many of the issues of the program and brought in expression of

interest. We went out to an RFP, which we've done broadly right across the province. We have 12 more intermediaries. We are doing expression of interest. We are basing it on quality over quantity. We've changed up how we're reviewing applications.

But, let me say, if there's evidence of wrongdoing, there are a number of things that we can do as a government and that's revocation of a nomination of an individual responsible for the impropriety, passing the information to other authorities including Employment and Social Development Canada, Canada Revenue Agency or the RCMP. So, I challenge the opposition to bring those people forward and we'll deal with them because we want it done right because immigration is important to PEI.

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

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

**Ms. Compton:** Mr. Speaker, as recently as last week we're hearing these stories; immigrants telling us that the people are coming here; they don't care about the deposits. The only reason they open their businesses is because they're afraid that they will be deported.

Minister: Is this a solid basis to operate a positive and helpful immigration program?

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

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

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

I won't repeat what I just said, but I will tell you this: that we provide newcomers with information, and that's provided through several avenues. We have regular information sessions. We are having one session again this week.

We meet with cultural organizations including, I mentioned, the Chinese association. We have employment standards officers that make presentations to the newcomers association. We have ongoing staff visiting businesses and we're ramping that up, again.

Vulnerable populations of workers that are employed, we are going to look out for them as a government because we need immigration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

### **Unethical practices in program**

One dark side of the program is that some entrepreneurs are looking for various methods of reducing or retaining their required expenses, such as telling young people in need of work to hand back some of their wages.

Minister: Why is your department allowing these unethical practices to take place?

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I can honestly say, Mr. Speaker, that we have had no individuals come forward to the immigration office on Prince Edward Island in regard to the comments that the opposition is making. I read the article and if you read the full article you can hear that in the article.

Let me tell you: we will do everything possible to protect those individuals if they come forward. The only time that they would have to be recognized would be in a court of law to defend what they're actually saying, so that's it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

One of those brave individuals, he came forward and spoke to the Canadian Press. He told the national media that coming forward

wasn't an option until he had managed to obtain enough work to gain his permanent residency and that he feels he's in a safer place to avoid retribution.

Minister: Why is your department allowing these unethical practices to take place?

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, you know, the accusations that the opposition is making in relevance to the article in the newspaper, that's fine, but we're here and this is real, right now. We need to investigate those possibilities of those accusations and I want those people to come forward to the immigration office of Prince Edward Island. I will be the first one to enforce whatever we need to enforce and take the message, whatever that message is, to the appropriate authorities because if they're breaking the law they're not doing us any good. They're not doing the province of PEI any good.

I'm satisfied with the direction immigration is going. The changes that we've made over the past six or eight months, has been really good and it's looking good for the future of the immigration program on PEI.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Our provincial immigration system needs to enrich new immigrants and our community, not this government's bank account. It is currently being used as a cash cow to cover poor fiscal management by this government.

### **Fiscal management by government of program**

Minister, I ask you, again: Why is money and not people what this government values most in immigration?

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, I think anybody that lives on Prince Edward Island would concur that immigration is being an immigration and migration and repatriation is playing a major role in how our economy is developing and why we're leading the country. Why our population growth is at 1.7% and leading the country in; manufacturing sales, housing starts, the list goes on; export development.

But the success stories out there; if you look at Alex and Martha O'Heara moved here from the United Kingdom. You got Youling Wei from China you have Stepan Makarov from Russia. I mean we've trucking companies that require drivers. We got fish plants that are working 24-7 because of that. There's all kinds of success stories.

If there is a bad apple in the basket let's find the bad apple; let's deal with it and let's move on with a good immigration program.

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

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

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

**Review of Provincial Nominee Program (further)**

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

Minister, I'm going to take you at your word and I want you to commit today. Minister: Will you commit to a full-scale top-to-bottom review of your government's PNP program?

**Mr. Myers:** Good question.

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

**Ms. Compton:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, I've already stated that approximately five or six months ago we did a full review of this program. We brought in expression of interest; we did an RFP for 12 intermediaries –

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** – we're trying to develop –

**Mr. Myers:** Premier's neighbour.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – we're trying to develop rural PEI. We know the importance of the immigration. We know the obvious migration to Toronto, Vancouver, Montréal. We have to do something different, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly what we're intending to do.

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

### Statements by Ministers

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

### **Youth Futures Council and YDAY 2017**

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

I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the work of the Youth Futures Council.

Our Youth Futures Council members include: Alexandra Dalton, Emma Huestis, Robert Larson, Kenzie Lund, Nicole Mountain, Tyler Murnaghan, Taya Nabuurs, Luke Poirier, John Ployer, Moira Shaw, and Ali Younis.

The Youth Futures Council plays an important role in youth engagement in Prince Edward Island. The council works closely with representatives from every department across government on issues that affect youth.

The Youth Future Council also helps to organize our annual YDAY. Since YDAY 2016, a number of great youth-focused initiatives have begun or expanded, including the creation of the Career Connect program which allows PEI university students and Holland College to receive Employment Insurance benefits while studying; the expansion of the Community Service Bursary to include grade 10 students and increase in the maximum bursary they can receive to \$750; the creation of the Ellevate program, an internship for youth females pursuing a career in

entrepreneurship; and the expansion of the Graduate Mentorship Program.

YDAY 2017 took place earlier this fall and was very successful. Many youth who attended YDAY 2017 indicated a desire to get more involved in helping make Prince Edward Island the best place for young people to live, work, and thrive.

Now, the Youth Futures Council is looking for new members to help them to do just that. Island youth who wish to share their voice with government and take part in this great leadership opportunity should now apply. Youth aged 16 to 29 can visit [princeedwardisland.ca/engagepei](http://princeedwardisland.ca/engagepei) to apply before December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

I ask all members of this assembly to share the word and encourage youth to apply. Together we can achieve great results, and I am looking forward to supporting this important work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister for the statement.

The Youth Futures Council was well attended this year in 2017; professionally run. The facilitators did a great job and it was great to spend most of the day there and to talk to people. I was able to sit with the minister, as well, for a portion of the day to hear what was going on.

This started in 2016, as the minister said. It went again this year in 2017. I want to talk about some of the themes I heard this year, compared to 2016 and that was on some of the action items from 2016, so we're talking about high-speed Internet across PEI so people could do the work they want to do, or create the business they want to create. They talked about electoral reform with this government from 2016 and the lack of action until 2017. They talked about mental health issues – a real – that came out strong on that day when I talked to people and they weren't seeing the action that they wanted to.

Do you know what? It was a good day and the people that are there are smart and they're the future, but you can't keep fooling them. So, on YDAY 2018, I'll be there; I expect the minister to be there; and I expect to see much more action on these files and the many other priorities that they come up with, rather than the action that happened from 2016-2017. We can't keep doing this. We can't just keep speaking about issues and just speaking about the youth. We need to show them real action and to show them real leadership, so that they are engaged and that they want to buy in. So, yes, I'm thankful that the council is set up and that the days are happening, but we're not going to get away with this if we don't actually act on it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Indeed, it's a great initiative, but only if the consultation is meaningful and the voices of youth are actually listened to and acted upon. I saw some communication from somebody who was a participant in 2016; came back in 2017 and saw the same issues as they had talked about in the first year of being still unaddressed.

I think we know what the youth issues are. Top of youth concerns are, I imagine, is to leave a planet and a society which is a place for them to grow up and live prosperous, healthy, and secure lives. That means making the right decisions economically and socially, and environmentally.

Morell-Mermaid just talked about mental health issues. He just talked about Internet issues. He talked about the plebiscite, and I think those are all absolutely valid concerns that youth have.

You will remember, Mr. Speaker, the debate that we had last year on lowering the voting age and how so many people spoke disparagingly of youth at that time. I mean that's not a way to encourage youth to be involved in the political process. Then, of

course, we had the plebiscite where 16 and 17 year-olds were invited to participate, and we all know how well that voice was listened to.

This is a great initiative, but it's only a great initiative if those voices are truly listened to and responded to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Biomass**

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

Last week, my department and I were pleased to host Nova Scotia's Minister of Finance, Karen Casey, MLAs Hugh MacKay, Bill Horne and Gordon Wilson, government officials from Nova Scotia's departments of transportation and infrastructure renewal, natural resources, and energy and members of the Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners Association to visit Summerside for a tour the biomass heat facility at Prince County Hospital.

The goal of the visit was for Nova Scotia to learn more about Prince Edward Island's model for biomass heat-use in public buildings. Biomass is an environmentally responsible, renewable energy source that helps reduce our province's greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on imported fuel. It also provides an opportunity to support our local industry through job creation and economic development.

Prince Edward Island pioneered the use of wood chips to supplement energy from waste systems and is seeing great success. By the end of this year, 29 facilities in Prince Edward Island will use biomass as their primary source of heat. We have seen that the use of biomass in public facilities has saved approximately 4.3 million litres of fuel oil, and has reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 12,000 tonnes.

Our province is recognized as a world-leader in wind energy. We are the second-strongest wind regime in the world after Denmark. Now, other jurisdictions are taking notice of our innovative use and model for biomass. Besides Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and

Labrador, as well as Ontario, have shown interest in what Prince Edward Island is doing. Prince Edward Island may be small, but we know how to make big things happen. We do a remarkable number of things well, especially when compared to other places that are much larger, and that is one of the things that makes us a mighty Island.

Our government will continue to support measures to increase our province's move to more green energy sources and invest in our province's infrastructure. Through our energy strategy, released earlier this year, we are focused on developing a stronger, more sustainable, and resilient province.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in government, industry partners and all Islanders to make this happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

I'm glad to hear that the minister is meeting with other jurisdictions on this topic, but there are some questions I'd like to have answered and I would like to know what the minister is doing in regards to bringing Maritime Electric on stream in possibly converting to biomass, and getting them off of fossil fuels. What I'm seeing is the minister is doing nothing to encourage that type of change or that type of growth. We need to get Maritime Electric off of fossil fuels and possibly move them into LNG tankers or a biomass conversion, and we're not hearing anything from this government in regards to that.

The minister talks about our forests, and something I've been saying and I've been beating it and drumming it: It takes 30 years to grow a tree. This minister, and this government, is doing nothing when it comes to a reforestation plan.

**Mr. LaVie:** Shame.

**Mr. Fox:** We need to be looking at that.

I remember one member over there when I talked about that, he agreed with me.

**Mr. J. Brown:** (Indistinct) member statement (Indistinct)

**Mr. Fox:** We need to move – if we're going into biomass, which is a great process, we need to enhance it and make sure it is sustainable for the future.

The minister talks about 29 government facilities. What are we doing to encourage and move private industry into that regard and help them move that way? I haven't heard nothing in regards to that and that's something I'd like to see.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. J. Brown:** It's a member statement (Indistinct)

**Mr. Fox:** We are doing great in renewable energy when it comes to wind energy, and I encourage that and I think that's a great thing. But, is there a way that we can also encourage biomass to help generate electricity to also enhance on that? I think we need to look at these things. I think that we need to keep on improving and we need to think outside of the box.

Sometimes I have to wonder if that's something this government actually knows about.

Thank you.

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

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

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

As we move inevitable and execrably towards clean, green energy and electrification, there's going to be this transition period as we move away from fossil fuels towards, again, electrification generated by clean, green sources.

One of those transitional pieces will be biomass, and forever humanity has used

biomass. That was really the only source of heating that we had for thousands of years, and it's never been the most efficient heat source, even today with the most efficient heat stoves that we have, wood stoves that we have. It still has a relatively high carbon output per unit of heat yielded. However, as the minister said, it has other benefits.

It has local economic benefits. It provides local jobs. It's a renewable resource, so you have to look at all aspects of biomass when you're comparing it with fossil fuels or clean, green energy. On many of those counts, it comes out very high. There are; however, other biomass options here and I wish we would grow hemp here, and I'm not talking about THC hemp. I'm talking about industrial hemp that could provide – as the member just mentioned, that it takes decades to grow a tree – hemp will grow in a season and provide enormous amounts of biomass in a much more sustainable way.

But again, we have to look beyond this. This is just a transition. We should not be looking at biomass as an end in itself. This is just a way to get us towards truly clean, green energy.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Presenting and Receiving Petitions

#### Tabling of Documents

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

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

Mr. Speaker, by Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table the 2016-2017 Annual Report on the Activities of the Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women for the period ending March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Family and Human Services, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By Command of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I beg leave to table transfer orders required pursuant to subsection 5.1 of the *Public Departments Act* since the House last met and I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, that the said document be now received and do lie on the Table.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Orders of the Day (Government)

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

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

I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 2, Consideration of the Capital Estimates, in Committee.

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

**Mr. McIsaac:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the Capital Estimates.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

I'll now call on the Deputy Speaker. Would you mind coming and chairing the Capital Estimates?

**Chair (Casey):** The House is now in a Committee of the Whole House to further consider the grant of supply to Her Majesty.

Hon. members, we are on page 17.

Capital Expenditure Health PEI.

Permission to bring a stranger on the floor?

**Leader of the Opposition:** Granted.

**Chair:** Thank you.  
Good afternoon.

**Jim Miles Executive Director:** Good afternoon.

**Chair:** Could you state your name and your title for the record?

**Jim Miles Executive Director:** Jim Miles, Executive Director of Fiscal Management for the Department of Finance.

**Chair:** Thank you. Welcome, Mr. Miles.

**Chair (Palmer):** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

My question would go towards the hospital equipment budget line. Quite often we hear about service clubs such as Rotary and Lions Clubs and different organizations, the QEH Foundation and various other organizations, whether it's a telethon or a community-based initiative raising funds for equipment.

I'm just wondering, can you give us a breakdown of how much money is actually provided by the provincial government through tax dollars, versus what is brought in through these different services clubs and the foundations so on and so forth?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** To give you a general overview of that. Basically, all equipment within hospitals, in general terms, are provided by the foundations. There are some initiatives that we would contribute funding to, like the linear accelerator would be an example, just because of the costs are quite prohibitive.

In general terms what we're talking about in the budget items would be that all the funds that are raised through the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Foundation or the Prince County Hospital Foundation, those dollars are raised by the foundations. They transfer it over to the department and the department then goes out and procures the particular pieces of equipment. They might tender it out or whatever the situation might be. In collaboration with the directors of particular departments within our hospitals, they work

with the foundation to prioritize what their potential equipment needs would be for the coming year.

If you look at the coming year, I think it's says the QEH, they're estimating that they will raise about \$2.5 million and \$1.8 million at the previous year, or the year after.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

I guess I'm curious then, as an example, the 2018-2019 budget estimate of \$15,983,700, would that number include the monies that are raised by the foundations and the service clubs?

**Mr. Henderson:** Yeah, actually, there would be other purchases in there besides what we would tender out, but we're estimating about \$2.5 million this coming year that would be raised by the foundation.

The only funding that we would provide the foundations is that we pay the HST on whatever the equipment purchases would be.

**Leader of the Opposition:** That's fine for now.

**Mr. Henderson:** But there are other, I should of mentioned too, that there are other facilities that other foundations that are raising money besides just the QEH and PCH.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Then, that's what I was referring to when I was saying the service clubs and the other community-based organizations that quite often do this.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm just looking at the long-term care facilities line. I see it, not on this page, but at the very front of the book, I see, after this year, it virtually disappears. There's nothing there. There's a few – \$10,000 next year and then nothing.

Can you explain how that fits into the plan for long-term care in the province?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** This has been identified many times, I guess, that the Riverview Manor and the Stewart Memorial manor will be, once their construction is completed, we have no further upgrades for some of our existing facilities or replacement of any of those facilities. If we were looking at adding, as an example, more long-term care beds into the provincial system, we would be, more than likely, working with a non-governmental organization, whether that be the private sector or whether that be community organizations that – if I use the example: the Atlantic Baptist Home is owned by a non-profit organization. It's a little different than Gillis lodge or what have you.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you.

In the health facilities line I see you that you under-spend by about \$2.5 million there. I'm just wondering what planned spending was dropped there?

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

**Mr. Henderson:** I'm too sure exactly what that is in an under-spend.

**Jim Miles Executive Director:** In this year, we under-spent on the peritoneal dialysis and post-renal transplanting program, but we're going to spend that next year. That was related to the QEH electrical upgrades not being done quite on time. We're not spending it this year, but we're spending it next year.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair.

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

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

Minister, the new manor in Tyne Valley, have there been a few design changes to save money on the front entrance.

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Not that I'm aware of.

**Ms. Biggar:** I'll take that.

**Mr. Henderson:** Okay.

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

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

Since the construction part of it is overseen under my planning, I'll take that question.

As far as the front entrance, there's been no changes in design.

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

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

Has there been any change in design to the awnings that go off the side where the seniors come out to enjoy – on the little walkway to the side?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** There's two little corners that originally had a little piece of roof over them which, yes, has been changed.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you.

Any reason why?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** It's just basically part of when they did the final plan, hon. Member.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Can we get a, like an awning over that so they can sit out if they don't want to be in the direct sun, or don't want to be in the rain?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** There's going to be a number of opportunities and areas for the residents to sit. There's a whole sunroom area. There is an outside garden. I know, originally, when we started talking about this, the community were looking to incorporate a serenity garden type of project there which would have a pergola and a number of different things in it. We're looking forward – we have allowed for space. There is a garden area that will be cordoned off for residents and that is something that the community wanted to contribute in memory, actually, of Dr. Madigane, but there's lots of spaces where residents are going to be able to enjoy fresh air, enjoy sunshine in an area that's their own private space, or with their family.

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

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

Thank you, minister. Is the kitchen or dining facilities in this building, have they been reduced in size?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** No.

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

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

So, the original design for the kitchen and dining area – is it true that that was designed for a larger amount of residents then there currently is beds for?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** The design is capable of accommodating more than the present plan of the layout, if that's your question.

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

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

I thought the original kitchen and dining room was designed for expansion in case the manor ever wanted to expand that they

could accommodate another wing or maybe even double the beds that are there. That's why I'm wondering if the size that's there now has varied any in design from the original drawings?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** It's the same size as was the original plan. It might be a different layoff or something like that inside, but there's not been augmentation of size to accommodate the present or any potential future.

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

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

Is the building being built for a potential expansion? Is it designed for a potential expansion down the road?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** The layout of the building is such that there's space there in terms of land. We bought eight acres of land for that particular facility.

**Mr. MacEwen:** There's 24 beds, right?

**Ms. Biggar:** Correct. Actually – may I answer?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** The present facility has 23, this will have 24.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** I assume that in the legislation and regulations that you have to have so much square footage in your kitchen or dining room facility based on the number of people that are there and based on the type of care that you provide.

I'm wondering: based on the kitchen and dining room size that's being constructed, what does that cover? Does that cover 30 beds? Does that only cover 24 beds? Does that cover 48 beds? Do you see what I

mean? If they want to expand, how much could they expand to with the current restrictions on kitchen and dining room area?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I think there's capacity there. If you look at the present kitchens in some other facilities, this particular facility will certainly be comparable to other facilities.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Thank you.

Could you bring me back the number – according to the legislation of what the maximum number of people that that kitchen and dining room area could legally service? – I guess is the question I'm looking for.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I'm sure as an engineer, you know that I can probably check with my engineers and see –

**Mr. MacEwen:** That's what I'm asking, yes –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes, I'm sure.

**Mr. MacEwen:** – to bring that back.

**Ms. Biggar:** I'll see what I can find out, hon. Member.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** I don't doubt you for a second and I know those engineers are watched now – I talked to a lot of them last Friday night, but can we do more than: I'll see what I can do? It's in the legislation that says: You have to provide this much kitchen space and dining room space for this number of beds. I'm assuming there's a finite square footage on that and it says that we can provide for this amount.

I think I heard the minister of health saying that – different shifts for lunch – it's just as

long as I know, what's the maximum capacity that that building can hold based on the kitchen and dining room size? – is what I'm looking for.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** As I said, I'll go back and talk to the engineers and get the information what I can get, obviously.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** I just wanted to give a shout-out to the engineers that are watching now and if I could have that by tomorrow, it'd be fantastic.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** They're out there in Tyne Valley working right now.

**Mr. MacEwen:** That's good.

**Ms. Biggar:** So, I don't think they're watching.

**Chair:** Shall we carry the section? Carried.

**An Hon. Member:** She's here for the paycheque.

**Ms. Biggar:** I check every morning (Indistinct)

**An Hon. Member:** I know.

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) last Wednesday (Indistinct).

**Chair (Casey):** The hon. Minister of Family and Human Services.

**Ms. Mundy:** I have a couple of documents here. On Friday I was asked to bring back a list of the Capital improvements for 2018-2019 for our seniors' units, as well as the seniors' housing units located across Prince Edward Island.

**Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Members, we're on page 19.

Capital Expenditure – Justice and Public Safety.

I'm going to read it first and then I'll open the floor for questions.

Capital Expenditure

Justice and Public Safety

2018-2019 Budget Estimate.

Equipment. "Appropriations provided for equipment." 911 system upgrades: 350,000. Corporate Registry: 100,000. Provincial Integrated Communications System: 600,000. Vital Statistics: 135,000. Court Technology: 200,000. Total Equipment: 1,385,000.

Capital Improvements. "Appropriations provided for Capital improvements to properties." Correctional Centre Improvements: 665,000. Total Capital Improvements: 665,000.

Total Capital Expenditure – Justice and Public Safety: 2,050,000.

**Mr. Fox:** Question.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

Minister, I'm wondering – on page three of the five-year Capital plan, in year 2019-2020, you have a \$5 million expenditure and then in 2020-2021, you've got a \$3.5 million expenditure.

Can you explain them?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** That, Madam Chair, is the renewal of the women's housing – the housing for women offenders at the provincial correctional centre. When the facility was first built, there was a different experience and expectation regarding women offenders and the space in which they are currently housed is really inadequate by any standards. In effect, it's in an area that was designed for weekend offenders. This is something that is overdue.

We spoke about it on the floor here when we had capital estimates last year.

There are 400,000 for a design in the 2018-2019 budget, and then 7.9 million for the construction in the two subsequent fiscal years.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Thanks, Chair.

This is a brand new construction of a brand new facility?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** It will be incorporated into the existing facility. It's not apart from the current facility. That's so the design part is being done in 2018-2019, but the intention is that it will be attached to and integrated with the other infrastructure such as intake that is in the total correctional centre at the present time.

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

**Mr. Fox:** This new wing, if I take it that way, this new wing, how many people will it hold, or offenders will it hold?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** I can give you the numbers for the experience in terms of the total actual bed days at the present time, which varies, depending on the year and the offenders who are there for various offences.

In 2014-2015 the total bed days, which was, that was the highest year that we've had, was 4,141. I would say the average would be on the order of 3,600. In 2016-2017 it was 3,300 –

**Mr. Fox:** Say that (Indistinct) again, please.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** In 2016-2017, bed days would be 3,600 in total.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, do you have another question?

**Mr. Fox:** Yes.

Can the minister give us an update on the police review that's going on?

**Chair:** It's not part of capital (Indistinct)

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

**Chair:** That's not part of the Capital Budget –

**Mr. Fox:** Not under capital.

**Chair:** – hon. member.

**Mr. Fox:** Okay.

**Chair:** Thank you –

**Mr. Fox:** The police –

**Chair:** Do you have any other questions?

**Mr. Fox:** Yes.

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

**Mr. Fox:** The police departments and the RCMP and the sheriff's department have expressed concerns to me in regards to escapes that we've had at the back of Sleepy Hollow.

I know for a fact that I have been there and there is no fenced in compound where a member can safely move a prisoner or an inmate from a vehicle to the inside back of the building. That was in the paper, I think, in 2010, and there was another one this year.

Why is this not being looked at? A secure place where a police vehicle, or transport vehicle can move in, the gate is closed, he's now inside a compound and the chance of escape is less?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Let me undertake to mention that to departmental officials in the event that it's something that may be taken into account during the design work for the expansion to accommodate women offenders – that women offenders. That may be possible and I'll certainly ask about that.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

I think there's a big liability issue here, Premier when these people are moved either in or out. I know in cases where I've been involved in it, a single-man car would go down there with one officer, and you'd have somebody in the back and you're trying to move that individual from the car in a dark unlit area into a backdoor by yourself because the correctional staff are not allowed to come outside the building and assist a police officer.

You can get, on a very busy Friday night, when you transport somebody from a rural area or from downtown Charlottetown and you're the only member taking them out there. I know, in some cases, the RCMP it's the same.

If you're going to do – if you would look at that, would you also look at the overall lighting and that whole camera security model for the movement of these?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** That's something I'd be prepared to ask the officials about, Madam Chair.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you.

The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora.

**Mr. Fox:** What are the system upgrades going into the 911 system?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Madam Chair, the 911 system came into effect in the spring of 2001. It's of a certain age and there is a need for upgrading of both hardware and software, which are dated because of – they're now 17 years old, probably earlier than that when the putting in place of the system started.

The initiative would see \$350,000 spent in the first fiscal year, 2018-2019, and 150,000

in each of the four subsequent years for a total of 950,000.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

Minister is there been any more thought to restructuring the 911 system with one central 911 location with a backup instead of having a Summerside one, a Charlottetown one, the RCMP one, is there any thought about consolidating them?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** There's not – part of this proposal. I should correct, if I may, Madam Chair, I said: May of 2001, it was May of 2000 that, I believe I said 2001, that that system was first put in place.

I can offer this detail on the changes. In the current fiscal year we spent 200,000 replacing the recorder system. In 2018-2019 it would be to upgrade the software and hardware. In 2019-2020 it would be to enhance or upgrade the IP phone capability for 911 and there are then, specific initiatives envisaged for the further three fiscal years.

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

**Mr. Fox:** I know in some jurisdictions they have combined 911 systems where you have a medical person, a firefighter or a police officer or those types of services all in one.

Has there ever been any consideration, and I want to protect jobs here, right? So you can do a seconded from, we'll say, Summerside city or Charlottetown dispatch into a central location.

Has there ever been any thought to move to that type of model because it's working well in other areas?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** It's not something that is in the current capital plan. It's something that we recognize that may, at some point, be taken into account. It's not

part of the plan that's coming forward with this Capital Budget.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Minister, can you explain what the core technology upgrade is?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** And this is in 2018-2019?

**Mr. Fox:** Yes.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** The court technology is really to modernize a system that's well past its best before date. The numbers involved, Madam Chair, would be to have a planning and design phase in the fiscal year 2018-2019 for \$200,000, and an implementation phase in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 with \$500,000 in each of those years.

The envisaged program is called FACTS, F-A-C-T-S, and if I had a minute I could tell you what those letters stand for. This is something that, in fact, was anticipated; the court technology management system – the acronym is FACTS – there was, has been and is still underway in 2017-2018, a needs assessment and that is funded under the Capital Budget for the year that we're now in.

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

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

Would this be an appropriate spot to ask an RCMP question, for the RCMP?

**Chair:** There's nothing in the capital for RCMP, so no.

**Mr. LaVie:** No, I know. I mentioned it here a few times so I was just wondering if it was a good topic to bring up.

**Chair:** You could do it during Question Period.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Well I mean, it's been brought up here three or four times; five times.

**Chair:** But, I think what the minister is telling you is that there's nothing provided in the Capital Budget this year for the RCMP.

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah, I'll ask the Premier that.

Premier: I noticed there's nothing in here for reinforcement of RCMP.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Reinforcement (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Could you explain what reinforcements – define reinforcements.

**Mr. LaVie:** I know the last number of years, RCMP had been cut and I don't see anything in the Capital Budget to replace the RCMP that have been cut.

What are you shaking your head at? You can answer this.

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Well, how come there's –

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Madam Chair, that would not be in the Capital Budget.

**Chair:** That's not in the Capital Budget, hon. member.

**Mr. LaVie:** Okay.

**Chair:** Do you have any other questions?

**Mr. LaVie:** No, that's fine, Chair.

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

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

I was wondering, the \$100,000 budgeted for the corporate registry; will that be a rework of the online version of corporate registry so that it's easier to use and you can search by, for example, officer name as opposed to just by business name, and for example, see all

of the corporations that a given officer belongs to?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Madam Chair, this is the third year for this item – third of three years, I should say – for this item to appear in our Capital Budget and this will mean that this will complete the upgrade of the corporate registry, and it would be ready to go live by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

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

So, by July 1<sup>st</sup>, the data will essentially be open so that people can go in and easily build a picture of the holdings of an individual on Prince Edward Island based on whether they're a shareholder, a director, an officer position within incorporated PEI companies?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** There is legislation to come to the floor quite soon that will deal with the requirements of information that would go with this information system. This is designed to make that business number system that we approved through legislation last year to make that work and to be interoperative with other systems in Canada.

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

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

Just to be clear, the concern that's been raised to me, and that I have as well, is that it's difficult to go in and get a picture of the holdings of an individual, and maybe that's by design and if it is, please let me know.

But, for example, if I were to go and search on my own name in the corporate business names registry – I cannot do that today. I have to search by a corporation name and then it tells me who the officers are.

So, there's no way for me to search by my own name and see which entities I am associated with as a shareholder, director, or officer. Will that be possible as of July 1<sup>st</sup>

when the corporate registry updates are complete?

**Chair:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Madam Chair, there will be much greater search capability or facility that will come with the new system. The current system, in a word, is antiquated and as I indicated, this will allow online self service for business. It will allow businesses to access government corporation services on the Internet, and the precise question of the information that will be included in the system is something that we will have an opportunity to deal with when the legislation comes to the floor.

**Chair:** Shall the budget carry? Shall this section carry? Carried.

Thank you. Just testing you.

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

**Chair:** Hon. members, we'll move onto Capital Expenditure – Tourism PEI on page 21.

I will read the capital expenditure and then we'll open the floor for questions.

2018-2019 Budget Estimate

Capital Improvements: "Appropriations provided for improvements and upgrades to the Provincial Parks, Confederation Trail and Golf Courses."

Provincial Parks: 300,000. Confederation Trail: 50,000. Gold Courses: 400,000. Shoreline Protection: 660,000. Total Capital Improvements: 1,410,000.

Total Capital Expenditure-Tourism PEI: 1,410,000.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque.

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

Minister, a few questions here: The 660,000 shoreline protection; what is that for?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Could you repeat that please? I couldn't hear you. Sorry.

**Chair:** Hon. member, could you please repeat your question?

**Mr. MacKay:** Certainly.

Thank you, Chair.

On page 21: 660,000 for shoreline protection. What is that for, exactly?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** It's the remaining unprotected area between holes eight and 16. It's continuing to erode and they want to build up the dunes' side of that so they don't lose two or three, up to three, golf holes on that side of the golf course.

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

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

Also, minister, I've had a few calls this summer – more than a few, actually – on Cabot Park and some of the renos that need done out there. Can you tell me if there's anything planned for any renovations at Cabot Park?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** From what I understand, there has been one building, actually, already removed and a new structure that will be going up there, likely, in the spring.

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

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

Will there be any upgrades to the electrical on the sites, minister?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** At this point in time, that's not in the plans. No.

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

**Mr. MacKay:** Also as well, the entrance in could use re-pavement. Has that been discussed at all?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Yeah, I think in the spring what we'll do is go to every campground that we own and review the infrastructure around it as far as paving and that sort of thing, and buildings.

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

**Mr. MacKay:** Final question for me, Chair.

Is there any money that Cabot Park can count on for sure at this point for any renos?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I couldn't hear.

**Chair:** Hon. members, the minister is having trouble hearing the question, so if we could just bring our focus back, I'd appreciate it.

The hon. Member from Kensington-Malpeque, could you please repeat your question?

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

I'm just curious, minister, has there been any funding allocated especially for Cabot Park and, if so, how much?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** The only funding that has been allocated is the rebuild of the building that was just torn down.

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

**Chair:** I have the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

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

Minister, a lot of trees were blown down at Crowbush during the last wind storm. I'm wondering if you had any update on that or if we're going to make sure that that gets cleared up before the winter sets in.

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I haven't had an update on it, but I would assume that they would clear them off if they're on the golf course themselves and if there was any damage done they'd want that prepared before the winter sets in.

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

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

I appreciate that. The Lakeside beach down there has a number of signs and a number of mentions in tourism guides and such to direct itself for people to go down towards Lakeside Beach.

I'm wondering, would you be able to commit to having some people in your department meet with myself and a few residents down there so we can get this issue of infrastructure and beach access taken care of within that area?

**Chair:** Good question.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

**Mr. MacDonald:** I have been in contact with the minister responsible for TIE and we'll make sure that we take a look at it in the spring.

**Mr. MacEwen:** Much appreciated, thank you.

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

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

I believe I heard there was an announcement of funding to improve the North Rustico boardwalk. There is some serious erosion taking place right along the harbour there that will soon be endangering the boardwalk.

I was wondering if that's included in this Capital Budget?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** It's not included in my Capital Budget, no.

**Mr. Trivers:** My honest question is: Where is that project included?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** That particular type of project would not be under capital budget, hon. member. If the town of Rustico are doing something and I'm not familiar what they may have submitted. It may be through infrastructure –

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

**Ms. Biggar:** – or community development, but it's not in Capital Budget.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Maybe indulge me. Is that project planned in another budget?

**Chair:** I'm seeing the Minister of Rural and Regional Development has –

**Mr. Murphy:** (Indistinct) announcement last Friday of that. It's ACOA, the province is in with the Community Development Program and ACOA and the boardwalk and I think there's – part of that program is erosion protection.

**Chair:** Excellent.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

Back to the shoreline protection again. I know from driving out to DeSable quite frequently, back when the plan B highway was done there was a considerable amount of rocks that were stockpiled and I know the

former minister had said, at the time, that they were being used to reinforce the shorelines at some of the provincial parks and other areas around our coastline.

I'm just wondering: Has that surplus of rocks been exhausted?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

We have worked with a number of different communities, but we still have need ourselves within some of our projects to retain some of that particular material. No, it hasn't been all exhausted and given out to other projects because at times we will need it ourselves.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you.

Further on that. With the Cornwall bypass project that's happening right now, do you see that there could be potential for more of that type of material to be excavated from that project?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** The transportation extension in that particular area out to New Haven, once we get into the actual construction, depending on what kind of rock base is there, materials, at this point I couldn't speculate how much material will be of that type that will be left over.

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

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

Minister, can you explain where Gateway Village would fall in under your appropriations for improvements to whatever-whatever-whatever?

**Chair:** The hon. Minister –

**Mr. Myers:** Don't be too specific.

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

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

What we're doing as far as provincial parks, gateway, we're replacing some of the Gateway playground, actually, at a cost of about \$125,000.

**Mr. Fox:** I heard that you were replacing –

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Playground equipment –

**Mr. Fox:** Yes.

**Mr. MacDonald:** We're actually, it's included in our Capital Budget for \$125,000 improvements.

**Chair:** Borden –

**Mr. MacDonald:** Whatever-whatever-whatever.

**Mr. Fox:** So, minister, when you're coming off the bridge and you're coming up to the toll plaza coming onto PEI there are the flags on the right hand side. Sometime, this year, somebody went in from the department, and they removed a bunch of trees and shrubs.

My question is: Why wouldn't the department ensure that they cleaned up their mess and they didn't leave the piles of dirt and the stumpage laying there so you can see it.

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I'll have to take that back, hon. member. I have no knowledge of –

**Mr. Fox:** Okay.

**Mr. MacDonald:** – leaving a mess in Borden.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Minister, back three or four months ago, I was asked to attend a meeting

at the Victoria park, down at Victoria-by-the-Sea. There was concern raised over the 30 feet of shoreline that they have lost over the last, I think he said 15 or 12 to 15 years.

Is there anything in the Capital Budget to help protect that shore or has there been any conversations with the park manager and the village of Victoria to improve that?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** There has been, to my knowledge, no, there hasn't been any discussion as relevant as my department.

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

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

Minister, with that meeting, it was my understanding, it was explained to me that the park was turned over from the province to the community. And that, at the time, they were told that if they had any need for light maintenance or repair material that the province would consider that going forward.

According to the gentleman I met with he told me that every time they submit some kind of request into the department for some paint to paint a fence or stuff like that, since they are actually managing the park now and took it over from the province, which lessen the burden off from you, they get turned down and rejected.

Can we check into that, also, to see if there is any money for capital that could be given to that park to help them maintain it?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** We certainly can. We've have had requests from the town of Borden before as far as Gateway Village and whether it be flags or a clock or siding or pavement or what have you and we've always answered promptly and precisely and we'll continue to do that. That's the first time I heard that request.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

Under provincial parks, is there money allotted in there, minister, for picnic tables?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Picnic tables are looked at right across the Island and their capital plan and maintenance every year.

Any specific park you're talking about?

**Mr. Fox:** Yeah.

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

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

I've been approached – I understand I have got a new lawnmower in Chelton, finally. But Chelton park is looking for some picnic tables. The viewing area, which I understand is under tourism up in Seven Mile Bay across from the Catholic church is looking for a few picnic tables.

Also, Gateway Village is looking for a few picnic tables. I'm wondering, can they be –

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Sorry, Chair.

We can take that under consideration.

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

**Mr. Fox:** I guess my final question would be: Minister, would you consider in the area of 25 picnic tables to service that area?

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** I'll take that into consideration.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Right from Cabot Park.

**Chair:** Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Is there any money in the tourism Capital Budget to help create safe, publicly accessible, environmentally friendly ATV trails to improve tourism on PEI?

**Mr. MacDonald:** No.

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Members, before we approve this, I just want to make a comment of my own to the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. I appreciate the dollars that I see allotted to the Confederation Trail. As most of you know, 21 members of my district and I cycled from Tignish to Elmira on the Confederation Trail. What a beautiful asset, minister, that we have on this Island and any dollars that you can put into that trail – we've encountered staff people along the trail. They were courteous and they were just absolutely amazing and I've cycled every inch of that trail and it's absolutely beautiful.

Minister?

**Mr. MacDonald:** We're actually putting additional info kiosks in at a cost of \$10,000, trail head entries at a cost of \$10,000, and compostable toilets at a cost of \$30,000 along the trail.

**Chair:** Great. Thank you, Minister.

Shall the section carry? Carried.

We'll now move on to Capital Expenditure – Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

I will read the Capital Budget and then open the floor for discussion.

2018-2019 Budget Estimate.

Land. "Appropriations provided for land purchases." Land Purchases: 365,000. Total Land: 365,000.

Equipment. "Appropriations provided for acquisition of Capital equipment." Light Fleet: 1,000,000. Heavy Equipment: 1,500,000. Total Equipment: 2,500,000.

Capital Improvements – Highways. "Appropriations provided for highway and bridge construction." Bridges: 5,000,000. National and Collector Highways: 15,000,000. Cornwall Perimeter Highway: 14,000,000. Provincial Paving: 8,000,000. Total Capital Improvements – Highways: 42,000,000.

Capital Improvements – Buildings. "Appropriations provided for the renovation, retrofit, and construction of Government-owned buildings and properties." Buildings: 7,920,000. Total Capital Improvements – Buildings: 7,920,000.

Total Capital Expenditure – Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy: 52,785,000.

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

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

On the appropriations of the land: \$365,000 – how many pieces of land is that minister?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** That is the normal budget that we have ongoing on a regular basis. That's our year-to-year normal budget. Sometimes we have to acquire so many feet of land – an acre of land – it depends on what the particular project is, but that's our normal budget.

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

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

So, how many pieces of land do you need to purchase for the Cornwall bypass at this point in time?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I think it's interesting to note that the perimeter highway project started back in 1973, actually, between Mt. Edward Road and St. Peters. This is a project that started way back then, back in 1999, there was land purchased for the Cornwall-North River area and Upton Road area. That area zone has been targeted since 1973.

In regard to the present project highway extension between North River and Clyde River, we already owned a number of pieces of land. We had to purchase – there were 32 – there are or were 32 impacted properties – seven were already owned by government and 25 were and are, at the time we started this, held by private individuals. I think we have about seven left to acquire.

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

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

So there's seven left to purchase. I would be surprised if you could get seven properties along that stretch for 365,000. Where is the remainder of the money coming from?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** As I explained, that is just our normal land purchase. It's not part of the Cornwall Bypass. It's incorporated into our negotiations with the project itself.

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

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

Where exactly does the money come from if it doesn't come through here? Where does it come from to purchase them properties?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** The Capital Budget as part of our highway – in the highway Budget part there. It's not under that land part. It's incorporated into the national highway project.

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

**Mr. MacKay:** Do you have a price for those seven properties right now that it's going to cost?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** They are still under negotiation with those particular property owners.

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

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

Are any of them – of the seven – are you going to have to expropriate any of the, do you think?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** No. Not at this time. Indications are that things are having good negotiations with those property owners. In fact, we've only ever had to expropriate two.

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

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

Just, I guess, a final question on the seven land dealings you're negotiating now. When do you expect to firm-up deals with them land owners – timeframe-wise?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

Things are going along very well, so we would expect and as part of our normal process, staff are out there meeting now. There's a couple of property owners that are not in the province at the moment, so when they're – things are ongoing – very well.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

Just a couple of questions with regards to the Hillsborough Bridge itself. Is their money set aside in this coming fiscal year for the active transportation lane that has been discussed for the Hillsborough Bridge from Stratford to Charlottetown?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Under the bridge work that's identified in this – that's not in this particular Capital line. It will be under the department. We are in the process of that.

Part of it was announced that we were going to move forward.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Sorry (Indistinct).

**Ms. Biggar:** I know. I'm sorry.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Hon. Members, if we could bring your attention back; we're having trouble hearing the questions and the responses.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Same question.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Trying to use my inside voice.

**Leader of the Opposition:** That's good because we are inside.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

What I was saying is that earlier this year we did announce that we're going to be looking at funding for that extension for the active transportation corridor, I believe it's called. We have done the work on doing the upgrades to the Hillsborough Bridge, so that will be proceeding with funding because it's on the national highway, but we're in the negotiations of looking at that funding for that particular project, hon. Member.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Chair.

So, minister, you stated that the work has already been done on the bridge.

**Ms. Biggar:** The design work.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Okay. Thank you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

So, does that include the reinforcements to be able to take the load of the pipe for the wastewater from Stratford to Charlottetown?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** That was part of the review and the design work, yes.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** When would you see that work actually taking place and being completed?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** We anticipate that will be part of an upcoming project, hon. member, as soon as we get the – we have to submit that as well to the federal infrastructure side of things. Once we get the final word back we'll have more update on that for you.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

Could we anticipate it would be in this coming fiscal year or two years down the road or three years down the road or?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** As you know, we have an agreement with the City of Charlottetown and Stratford. Now that that's proceeding that's about an \$8 million project that will need to occur over a number of fiscal years. I'll bring you back an update on where that is.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you –

**Leader of the Opposition:** Oh, sorry, Chair

–

**Chair:** Sorry –

**Leader of the Opposition:** – (Indistinct) another question.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Just with regards to capital improvement buildings. There is a significant jump for 2018-2019 over 2017-2018. I'm wondering if you can identify what that project is. Is it one or is it several projects?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** The \$7 million is the phase 5 of the Queens County Government Garage. We expect that to start in the spring of 2018. That's going to include the construction of the maintenance depot building, and will include the administration offices for highway maintenance operations.

The other \$920,000 is normal appropriations for general maintenance – our general maintenance budget on provincial buildings.

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Chair.

There is work to be done in Stratford over by the crossroads intersection. I believe there's a realignment of the road and possibly a roundabout being put in there, as well.

I'm just wondering, what responsibility is the province taking financially, if any, for the construction of a new fire station, police station, depot for the RCMP and the EMS because that facility, first and foremost has served its life and it's going to have to be relocated with the realignment of the highway.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

We will be doing a dual-lane roundabout at Mason Road and Georgetown Road, I believe that's what you're referring to.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Correct.

**Ms. Biggar:** As a result of that I do know that the town of Stratford are having negotiations and discussions around what the fire department is going to do.

In terms of my department taking that on as a capital budget, it's not there. It's not something that we would be taking on as a capital build ourselves on behalf of Stratford.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Thanks, Chair.

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

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

My first question is regarding the work to be done in Hunter River to widen out the highway, Route 13. I was wondering when that'll be done.

The hope of the residents was that that will be one of the earlier pieces of work to be done; widening out Route 13.

Is that going to be done in the fiscal year?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

This particular part, we have Route 13 on that. That's, I believe, the Rennie's Road area that you're talking about.

**Mr. Trivers:** Right in the village of Hunter River, sorry Chair.

**Ms. Biggar:** Right in the village of Hunter River.

Fredericton to Hunter River, there is a 2.3 project on there.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Fredericton to Hunter River would be Route 2, which –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Mr. Trivers:** – and it's good to hear you're doing some work there.

In particular, when you're widening out Route 13 –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yeah.

**Mr. Trivers:** – going north of –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Trivers:** – Hunter River, you have done a couple of chunks of that, which is great. It should help with the cyclists in particular.

The unsafe area, the biggest issue, is the area right in the village near the Hunter River bakery and all the way up to the Bungay Road.

When is that going to be done?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I am certainly familiar with that area. I actually had a nice lunch at the Hunter River bakery this summer. There is a beautiful home constructed right across the street there. I know there's a lot of construction going on in that area.

That's not something that, right now, we have had on our plan to widen that local area there. We are certainly doing widening up the road further between where we stopped off and out to New Glasgow.

At this point in time I'm not aware, under the Capital Budget. It may be under the other budget, hon. member, and I'll find out some more on that for you.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Thank you.

This is an urgent need for safety purposes there. It's really kind of distressing me here that it's not in the Capital Budget. I certainly hope it is in a budget for this coming year because this is an area where families are walking, tourists are walking.

Next question, Chair –

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) Madam Chair.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Just to clarify that, hon. member because there are other funds that come out of operating budget.

As I said, as we go forward, those are areas that we also look at.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Staying in Hunter River. That intersection with Route 2 and Route 13, I'm sure your department gets many complaints, as well, about the safety of that. I know I do, as the MLA.

If we had an infrastructure summit, of course, we'd be able to get them all out on the table and discuss it.

Are there plans to fix that intersection, or provide some sort of solution to allow people, especially, who are coming out, who are headed south and are turning east during rush hour because it is, I think, there was one accident there this summer. It's an accident waiting to happen. It's a main highway. There are trucks coming down that hill that are heading west. It's only a matter of time until more accidents happen there.

Do you have plans to, at least, fix – come up with ideas for fixing that intersection?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** As you know, there are turning lanes there already, hon. member. I'm not sure what solution you're suggesting, exactly.

It's very difficult when a transfer truck is coming down the hill, Hunter River hill, either way, to have stop lights at the bottom of a hill for instance. I don't think you're suggesting that there should be stop lights at the bottom of Hunter River hill when you're coming east to west would be impossible for a vehicle to pretty well stop on that grade.

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

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

I think the discussion needs to be had. There are a number of potential solutions. Lights are probably not the best one.

For example, restricting left hand turns during rush hour from that intersection for people heading south might be one. Putting in, I've heard of solutions where, in fact, you can turn left into oncoming traffic by expanding the shoulder, perhaps, and then crossover back into the right lane. I can't remember the name, but that solution has been used. You may have to look at innovative solutions. Providing a place where the people can turn right and then turn and go back.

The point is: it's an unsafe intersection and if we don't do something, we're going to have accidents and people are going to be injured or killed.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I know our department has been in contact with the Hunter River council, I believe it is. I'll take that back to them.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Hazel Grove Road is one that has been on the complaint list for years and years, well before my time as MLA.

My understanding when I talk to the road maintenance folks is it requires funds and capital budget in order to do it properly; add in drainage, perhaps, maybe flattening out. It's the hill that goes up Hazel Grove Road from Route 2, and paving.

Is that in the Capital Budget this year?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Actually, Madam Chair, we have \$8 million in our Capital Budget for paving. We don't have a list of the roads. We have budgeted, I think this year, we went from 5 to \$6 million and we're going up to \$8 million in paving for next year. That's a result of our partnership with the federal government. We are open to having

more discussions. We'll be moving forward on what our paving allocation in each district is. I think you had about 8 kilometres this year done in your district –

**Mr. Trivers:** How many, sorry?

**Ms. Biggar:** Eight, at least.

I think, hon. member, we are very cognizant though of areas and we'll work together with the communities.

**Chair:** Hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, do you have another question?

**Mr. Trivers:** Yes, I do.

**Chair:** Okay.

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

Minister, I wondered, so are you committed to doing Hazel Grove Road in the next fiscal year coming up?

**Ms. Biggar:** You want it ditched? We'll ditch it.

**Mr. Trivers:** That would be a start. Anything you can do to improve the drainage and fix up that road. It's been a thorn in the side of the residents for decades.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Minister, I mean, there are a number of roads, and I do appreciate that there is some good pavement that came in, especially under the collector highways.

For example, you paved Rattenbury Road and there were some sections that needed some pavement, but there are other roads that, in my opinion and the opinion of residents that I talk to, could have been done first.

In fact, you paved directly by Trout River Road, a broken, broken awful section where Trout River Road meets Rattenbury Road. You can just imagine what those residents are thinking when they're travelling that broken road to get to that new pavement on Rattenbury Road, which wasn't in as near as bad of shape.

I do appreciate you have to have priorities, but, again –

**Chair:** Do you have a question, hon. member?

**Mr. Trivers:** – if you're talking to the residents, I would suggest that Trout River Road should be done. Are you planning to do that this fiscal year? Is that in this Capital Budget?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I know the Rattenbury Road very well, it leads into Park Corner there and it's certainly a – is that not the area? No, sorry, it's the Grahams Road –

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) bridge

**Ms. Biggar:** – we did because that led into Park Corner, certainly was a high-traffic area.

We'll take all those under consideration, hon. member.

**Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay, well, Chair, since we're here I mean, maybe I'll just give my list of priorities.

Since we don't have an infrastructure project –

**Ms. Biggar:** Why don't you submit that (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Yeah –

**Mr. LaVie:** We don't have all day.

**Chair:** – hon. member –

**Mr. Trivers:** Well –

**Mr. LaVie:** Haven't got all day.

**Chair:** – I've got a long list here.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay.

**Chair:** The minister has asked you to submit your –

**Mr. Trivers:** One final –

**Chair:** – list to her –

**Mr. Trivers:** – one, Chair.

**Chair:** She has asked –

**Mr. Trivers:** Just one final one.

**Chair:** – to submit your list to her. So, if you could do that, that would great.

I'm going to give you one more question.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay.

**Chair:** I'll be happy to come back to you after I have exhausted this list.

**Mr. Trivers:** The Member from West Royalty-Springvale talked about it in his member's statement; the Island Honey Wine Company on Millboro Road.

We managed to get that road into gradable shape this year, finally, but it is a high-traffic road with businesses, lots of residents, all the roads around it are paved. We'd really like to see Millboro Road paved in this coming year.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

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

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

Minister, I want to go back to Cornwall bypass for a second. You alluded to there's seven more pieces that have to be bought or purchased.

With that, it has come to my attention, that the project manager or people working on the site have found that some of the land that is actually in the plan for the Cornwall bypass is now being deemed almost unsuitable because of wetland.

Can you add any comments to that?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I couldn't comment specifically because I'm not involved in the negotiations, but if there's a particular part of land, I'm sure the staff that are negotiating those areas –

**Mr. Fox:** Well, what I've been told –

**Ms. Biggar:** – will certainly –

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

**Mr. Fox:** Thanks, Chair, sorry about that.

What I've been told is sections of the planned route have now been deemed as too wet to actually construct on.

Can we check on that?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

We have our environmental assessment approved for that whole route, hon. member.

**Mr. Fox:** Yeah.

**Ms. Biggar:** So, I don't think it would have been approved.

**Mr. MacKay:** She's got to stop talking to Ronnie.

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

**Mr. Fox:** I'll say it again: from what I have been told, and understand, is that more land might be required as the route that was approved during the environmental assessment or whatever has now been found to have been wet.

If you could check on that, that'd be great.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I can tell you, hon. member, that the route that we have planned, we have approved, we have funded for, is the route that we will be doing the project on.

**Mr. Fox:** Okay.

**Chair:** You're good?

**Mr. Fox:** Chair.

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

**Mr. Fox:** I have got probably about eight.

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

**Mr. Fox:** I want to talk a bit about the North River Fire Department. It's my understanding that –

**Ms. Biggar:** The North River?

**Mr. Fox:** Fire department.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Mr. Fox:** It's my understanding that the province is now buying the old arena next door and that they're going to put a new route from the fire department out onto the York Point Road.

My question is: Why would the government go to all that expense, or why wouldn't somebody in the engineering section pick that up and not consider putting traffic lights, pre and at the fire department exit coming out to stop traffic to allow the fire department out, instead of spending \$850,000 on a building and then having to go through all the rigmarole to get a new road back out onto the York.

Why wouldn't the department's engineers figure that out?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

In our discussions with the fire department, this route is the most safest for them to exit during constrained time of a fire. They're very pleased with the new route because it will allow them to safely exit onto that particular section of highways.

It, you know, in consultation with the fire department was an amicable way to plan that route in consideration for the fire department.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

Can you give us an update, minister, on the Prince Edward Home and what's being done with that, is there any capital money going into that? Are we into negotiations with the city in turning it over or doing something with it?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** There is nothing in this particular budget, hon. member, under that particular – actually, when you talk about demolition of buildings, it's not a capital expenditure. It comes out of operating budget.

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

**Mr. Fox:** The power cable project. The power cables are owned by the province, right, minister?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Correct.

**Mr. Fox:** Does Maritime Electric pay a fee for using or have access to the cables?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I'll have to bring that back to you, hon. member, in terms of the agreement that's put in place, but we do own the cables –

**Mr. Fox:** Yes.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Is the province given any special rate by Maritime Electric above a major user for any of these government buildings or that? Are we given any special rate?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Electrical rate?

**Mr. Fox:** Yes.

**Ms. Biggar:** Hon. member, I don't know the details of day-to-day of what our rates are in terms of that, you know, what each – I can't imagine that we'd be given a special rate, but I will certainly verify that with the PEI Energy Corp.

**Mr. Fox:** Okay.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Minister, talking about site clean-ups in Tryon and plan B, both of those projects, the one in plan B has been over now, I think, for three to four years. The one in Tryon has been done for, at least now, a year and a half.

I'm wondering why the contractors weren't made clean-up the sites. The actual, like, there are two areas which are stockpiles of dirt and rocks and – why weren't they made clean them up?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

In particular, with the Bonshaw project, we were very pleased that this year we were able to open our Bonshaw provincial park –

**Mr. Fox:** Yeah.

**Ms. Biggar:** – which was a phenomenal asset, and is going to be a legacy project piece of that particular project for Islanders. It's, as you know, or may have seen, the success of it and the popularity of it is certainly great to see for all Islanders.

In regard to those particular projects, hon. member, we have compiled that material because we will be using it ourselves in the future. As we need certain pieces of material. We will access that ourselves. We may need it at other projects. From time to time you may see it dug out here and there. That's because we have taken some material from it ourselves for other projects.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Both of those sites, there is one on the right hand side in Tryon prior to the new bridge.

I'll give you credit, too, for a second. The project in Bonshaw, for the park there, that was a tremendous project and it's great to see people using it and enjoying it.

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

**Mr. Fox:** With that if both of those sites, which are full of dirt and rock and everything else are owned by government is anybody allowed to go in there and remove stuff from it?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** No.

**Chair:** The hon. Member from Borden-Kinkora, I'm going to give you this last question –

**Mr. Fox:** Then, you can come back?

**Chair:** – and then I'll come back to you.

**Mr. Fox:** Sure, no problem.

The new substation that was put in Borden-Carleton for the power cables to come across, there was quite a schmozzle that developed between the rock that was placed on the shore. In the contract, or in the agreement, under that project they were supposed to use Island sandstone and stuff that resembled the shore.

Somebody made a judgment, or made a decision to not follow the contract and they put in granite, which after lobbying by the town and various groups, that granite had to be hauled out and then the Island sandstone had to be put back in.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Mr. Fox:** Who's responsible for that cost or that frig up?

**Chair:** Hon. member, I would ask you to not be using unparliamentary language. I

know you have a vast vocabulary and I know you can find a better word.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy.

**Ms. Biggar:** That particular project, hon. member; the project manager, which was Maritime Electric, did come to agreement with the town of Borden and when you asked me if anybody can go on property and take material, I should have clarified: Unless it's with government permission, they cannot go on the property.

Because of our partnership with the town of Borden and with Maritime Electric as part of that particular project, we wanted to ensure that whatever's left behind as a community was to their suitability. I know Maritime Electric oversaw that final phase of making sure that the area was updated and they did use some of the red sandstone rock to put on top of the other rock.

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

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

We have a write-in question here from a friend of the minister's, Joe McKenna, who is wondering about Route 2 between Mount Stewart and Morell, otherwise known locally as the Canavoy straight stretch. I'm wondering if it's on the priority list for the Capital Budget. I know the recap is not capital, but this would be Route 2 and it would be under capital, I believe.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** What's that road again, hon. member?

**Mr. MacEwen:** Route 2 between Morell and Mount Stewart, otherwise known as the Canavoy straight stretch.

**Ms. Biggar:** I don't see that on there at the moment.

**Mr. MacEwen:** All right.

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

**Mr. MacEwen:** Both Joe McKenna and I would love it if it gets on there soon, and it's also a great stretch. I know they put a passing lane in Tracadie, in around the Speaker's riding there. It's a main, as you know from the east to west coming in Charlottetown, and it is a nice long stretch of road that will be coming up for repair.

So when that does happen, I think it would be ideal for a safe passing lane if your department would consider it when it does indeed come up on your list.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I'm sure we will certainly take all of those concerns into consideration and take it all under advisement, hon. member.

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

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to look at the costs for the Cornwall Perimeter Highway, please, minister.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I see the four years for which we have estimates on page 3 at the front. The total there is \$38.3 million. Is that entirely provincial money that we're looking at there?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** We always have to pay that and budget it upfront, hon. member, because even though it's a partnership with the federal government it still has to be budgeted for in our Capital Budget.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** So, are you saying that we will get half of that money back?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Partially, a part of that will be refundable over – yes.

**Chair:** the hon. Leader of the Third Party.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I was of the understanding that the Cornwall Perimeter Highway was a 50/50 project with the federal government, so is it not 50% we'll get back, or?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Land is not covered under that. That's the only part that's not covered under the 50%.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** So, the \$38.3 million, if we exclude the small percentage which would be for land purchases, the actual cost to the Provincial Treasury is going to be 50% of that, approximately?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** As was quoted, the cost, the budget of the entire project, is estimated at 65 million. But, the provincial government in the end will have incurred approximately 34 million over the total cost of that project because of our funding arrangements with the federal government.

So, when you say we're spending 65 million, people say we're spending 65 million on a particular project, but we are eligible to get up to 50% of that back.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I didn't say that, actually, minister and I –

**Ms. Biggar:** No, I didn't say you did.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – would be very –

**Ms. Biggar:** I didn't say you did.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Okay.

I just want to be really clear; the 38.3 million that we're spending over the next four years, we are going to get half of that –

or is that entirely coming out of the Provincial Treasury? Does that include the federal money or not?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** That would be our provincial portion.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you.

If I look at the previous year, 2017-2018, I see there's a \$14 million expense for the Cornwall Perimeter Highway there. If you add that to the 38.3 million, you get 52.3 million; entirely provincial funds; that's a long way from 34.

Can you explain that?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** That includes the collector highways as well, hon. member, not just the TCH. If you read it, it says national and collector highways.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Maybe I'm –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I beg to differ, Chair.

**Ms. Biggar:** Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, (Indistinct) I was looking at the wrong one.

It's eight, eight – 14 – oh sorry –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Fourteen and 18.

**Ms. Biggar:** 14 and 18, yes.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** And then 5.3 (Indistinct) which gives us 38.3 –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes, right.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – all provincial money, and then if you look, Chair, in the previous year 2017-2018 –

**Ms. Biggar:** I'm sorry. I don't have that (Indistinct)

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Well, it's on page –

**Ms. Biggar:** Oh, on the other page?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah.

**Ms. Biggar:** Sorry. I got it here.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** 14.4 million, now we're up to 52.3 million.

Can you explain why the huge discrepancy between that and the 34 million that we're constantly told it's costing the province?

**Chair:** (Indistinct) Mr. Miles.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I'll let Jim and them take that. They have the details in front of them.

**Jim Miles Executive Director:** So those numbers that you're looking at there, the 53 or 54 million, that's the total expenditure. We'll claim that back against the federal government and they'll give us half of that.

**Mr. Roach:** We'll get 25.

**Jim Miles Executive Director:** We'll get 27 million, in rough numbers, without the land and this and that from the federal government, so our net cost for that road will be \$27 million based on those numbers that are here.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** The numbers are not adding up here because we're told it's 65 and now I hear it's 52.3. Like, what is the budget estimate for the full cost of the Cornwall Perimeter Highway?

**Chair:** Jim Miles.

**Jim Miles Executive Director:** Again, there was expenditures in old year related to that. At the end of the day, the original estimate was around \$65 million for the whole project. We expect it to come in at less than that now.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Is that less than 52.3 million, is the total estimate?

**Jim Miles Executive Director:** No. This is our estimate as of today, roughly. So, that gives you 2.3 plus whatever we spent in the

old year on the Trans Canada extension would be the total that we expect to spend and I think the number is closer to 60 or whatever, a little less than that maybe.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Okay.

Thank you, Chair.

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

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

Question for the minister. Minister, phase two was supposed to be done at the Souris beach, the rock off the shore. Do you know if that's in your Capital Budget?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Just a moment. I don't believe it's in this particular part of the budget, hon. member.

**Mr. LaVie:** Does it come under capital?

**Ms. Biggar:** It's not in this particular part. It's not in there right now, hon. member. I can get you an update on it, though.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** So, that won't be done again this year?

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Or next year?

**Ms. Biggar:** There's a study going on right now –

**Mr. LaVie:** No, no (Indistinct) studying for years.

**Ms. Biggar:** I'll get you an update on that, member.

**Mr. LaVie:** Please.

**Ms. Biggar:** I will.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Thank you.

I've been working with the last minister, I'm not sure if you're aware or not, Mr. Vessey, on the Dingwells Mills turn. That's where Route 2 meets Route 4 and we paved all three roads leading up to it, but we haven't done the Dingwells Mills turn yet, the actual turn.

Do you know if that's going to be done this year?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** It's not on the list I have in front of me, hon. member, but I'm sure that our department have it on their radar.

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah, it is definitely on the radar. We've been working on it for four or five years and paving up to it so far and we haven't paved the actual turns because it's going to be a whole new turn, so I was just wondering if it was on the Budget this year.

Just one more? One more?

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Minister, can you tell me if you met with your staff yet to see if they are going to meet with the North Lake Harbour Authority Inc. over the bridge? Could you ask the staff that – if there was a meeting set up over the North Lake Harbour Bridge?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I haven't had an opportunity to discuss that yet.

**Mr. LaVie:** Okay. That's it, Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you.

The hon. Member from Belfast-Murray River.

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Chair.

This questions for the Minister: Minister, first of all the Murray Harbour and the walkway that was patched for the winter –

can you tell me if that would be on the capital budget for next year?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes, it is.

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

**Ms. Compton:** I'm just wondering if it includes any work that might need to be done to the bridge besides the walkway and whether you've taken into account the fact that the sewer runs underneath the walkway.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** The bridge itself, hon. member, is a solid structure. The concern was the fact that that particular sewage pipe was attached under the bridge and the deterioration of that sidewalk necessitated the work that we had done this year. The bridge itself, though, is solid. So, it's not a concern at the moment.

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

**Ms. Compton:** The sewer is actually attached to the side of the bridge and the walkway cantilevers out over that.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes.

**Ms. Compton:** So I have your assurance that that will be repaired next year.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes. The sidewalk's going to be done.

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

**Ms. Compton:** Also Minister, you mentioned earlier, I believe, that there are 10 bridges that are not being used or are closed on the Island. Is that – I think I heard 10, but –

**Ms. Biggar:** Yes. I have to go back and find that.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I'll have to look through my notes, but there's some that are restricted and some are closed and it's not in the Capital Budget, but it's in my notes here somewhere.

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm just wondering if the floating bridge is a bridge that you're going to consider opening again and repairing.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Actually, the floating bridge – we certainly reviewed that area and the detour that's around it is not exponentially long for people to have access to each end of that road, so it's not on there for replacement, no.

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Chair.

I've had a number of – well, first of all, the community and we did submit a petition to your department a while back and I've had people reach out from the ATV association and also from the snowmobilers association with the concern that that is not being repaired because it's a concern for them – they use it regularly for recreation. So, I'd just like you to maybe consider, reconsider putting that on your list for repair or replacement.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** As I said, I'm certainly familiar with the area. At this time, hon. Member, there's no plans to replace that bridge.

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

**Ms. Compton:** Thank you, Chair.

You talked earlier about the roundabout going in at the Mason Road and it was brought to my attention by some concerned Islanders who use the Mason Road – that

potential roundabout that's going in there. They're wondering why you wouldn't close off that end of the Mason Road and divert the traffic to the traffic lights at Sobeys. They're going to go through the roundabout and stop at a traffic light anyway. It sounds like there's going to be a lot of disruption in that particular area, including the Cross Roads Fire Department; I'm just wondering, Minister, if that has been something that your engineers looked at.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** There's been extensive consultation, hon. member, with the community in that area, with the town council, with the fire department, with EMS, with RCMP. We have had very extensive communications with that community, public meetings have been held – were held – have the support of the community. So, we haven't had that brought up to us. We have had very extensive consultation with that community before going forward. If you have a particular question about or you want to see – if you haven't seen the plan – once we get the final plan done, we'd be happy to have you come in and have a look at it.

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

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

Minister, you had said that the federal government doesn't cover – they only cover half of the project, not anything to do with the land purchase. What is the Budget you have estimated for the Cornwall Bypass for land purchases?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I'm not sure if you have that – \$4 million.

**Jim Miles Executive Director:** About \$4 million.

**Ms. Biggar:** Yeah, about \$4 million.

**Mr. MacKay:** Thank you.

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

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

Minister, going back to the power cable coming across in Borden – I guess my point being is that, yes, there had to be remediation done in what was said to have supposed to be and what ended up being and then they had to put it back, right?

Can you confirm or tell us that that extra cost for that is not going to fall back on the rate-payers of PEI and that it will be born or – it'll be the responsibility of Maritime Electric to pick up that cost because they deviated from the contract.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Certainly. Anything that the company had to do to meet their obligations with that community is not transferred over to rate-payers.

**Mr. Fox:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Minister, in the heavy equipment for Budget of \$1.5 million – what's that for?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** That's our regular budget that we have in the event that we have a snowplow break down, or a grader, or something like that that needs to be replaced, that's our general operating capital.

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

**Mr. Fox:** So it's not earmarked to buy any new equipment?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** It's earmarked to buy heavy equipment if we need it, yes.

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

**Mr. Fox:** I'm confused. It's earmarked for in case you have to buy any heavy equipment. Is there any heavy equipment scheduled to be bought or replaced?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** I don't have a specific list. There may be a heavy truck here and there or a grader that we need to do. We bought substantially a number of heavy snowplows a number of years ago to meet the need that we have in heavy snowfall events. So, certainly we are prepared in that regard. From time to time there may be the need to replace a truck if it's got heavy mileage on it and those incidences. Right now our fleet is pretty good shape, but we have to be prepared in the event –

**Mr. Fox:** Yes, and I understand that.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Two quick questions, Chair.

Can you provide us, Minister, with a list of what bridges you plan to work on; what sections of national collector highways that are going to be done; and what extra areas are going to be done included in that \$8 million for provincial paving? Can you provide us a list with that stuff? A breakdown?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

In terms of the bridges itself, hon. member, we have a number of bridges targeted in that Budget specific and then other bridge work – smaller bridges – other bridge work, as necessary, but I can get a list of what bridge work is planned that we're aware of that is going forward right now, but who knows. Fortunately we haven't had a big event that has washed out a bridge, or anything like that, but we have to have a budget in there too.

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

**Mr. Fox:** Final question with me, Minister.

Can you tell me – last year I was told that this year the bridge in Searletown, on that collector highway, which is a heavily used road, was going to be replaced or repaired. There was not a thing done to it. Can you tell me, is that bridge on the list to be repaired or upgraded?

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

**Ms. Biggar:** The list that I have right here is not on this particular list, but I will talk to the engineers to see what work they have planned. I know it was extensively looked at to ensure that it's safe, so we will get back to you on that, hon. member.

**Chair:** Shall the section carry? Carried.

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

**Chair:** Sorry hon. Member.

The hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald.

**Mr. Trivers:** Nice try, though.

I'm just wondering – speed radar signs are something that all the communities in my district have asked for. Do you have any plans to purchase them for communities in the district? My district, 18, Rustico-Emerald, at least – like, New Glasgow, Stanley Bridge, Breadalbane.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** That's not in Capital Budget, hon. Member. No.

**Mr. Trivers:** Okay, thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you.

Now, shall the section carry? Carried.

**Mr. Roach:** Madam Chair, I move the Speaker take the chair and that the Chair make report to Mr. Speaker.

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, I wish to report that the committee has gone into capital supply to be granted to Her Majesty and has come to

certain resolutions thereon which said resolutions I am directed to report to the House whenever it should be pleased to receive same.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Mr. Roach:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, that the report of the committee be received.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Chair:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee be now adopted.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Ms. Biggar:** Call the hour.

**Speaker:** The hour has been called.

This House will recess until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

**The Legislature recessed until 7:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** You may be seated.

#### Motions Other Than Government

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

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

Opposition would now like to call Motion No. 1 to the floor.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk Assistant (E. Doiron):** Motion 1.

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

**WHEREAS** thousands of Islanders currently do not have a family physician;

**AND WHEREAS** there are currently physician and specialist vacancies in our hospitals and health care facilities across this province that are hampering the ability of Prince Edward Islanders to access health care services in a timely fashion;

**AND WHEREAS** the shortage of physicians and specialists is directly and adversely impacting the health and quality of life of our residents;

**AND WHEREAS** the shortage of health care professionals is negatively impacting the quality of life for our existing health care workers who are working in situations where there is staff shortages;

**AND WHEREAS** heavy workloads with little backup impedes the ability of our province to attract and retain physicians and specialists;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Members of this Legislative Assembly call on government to convene a series of public meetings of front line health care professionals to outline the problems and discuss collaborative solutions to address this ongoing crisis in our health care system.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

I'll now call on the mover of this motion, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, to speak to the motion.

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

It's a pleasure to rise here this evening to move our motion calling on government to seek public meetings with frontline health care professionals so that we can discuss and find a solution of the government's inability to recruit and retain health care professionals in this province.

This, like the shortage of long-term care beds, like the lack of affordable housing, like the shortages in psychiatry, is not a new issue in our province. But it is a problem that this government seems to be unable to address.

If anything, the shortages in our physician complements seems to be getting worse. Our opposition continues to raise over and over again our concerns that Prince Edward Island does not have adequate family physicians to meet the needs of our population. Yet, all we get are announcements that we have new physicians coming to our province. In the end, they either don't come or they do not stay.

As we have seen recently, if they stay they might move from one community to the other, thus limiting the access that patients have for a family doctor in a rural community.

The fact that we do not have enough psychiatrists to meet the needs of Islanders with mental health issues is certainly not new. It's not isolated to our province alone, as we have recently seen news reports from Nova Scotia. I think we really need to get out in front of this and actually talk to the health care professionals in a collaborative manner to find out from the experts what we can do to help with this issue.

The fact that we do not have enough psychologists to meet the needs of children in our schools is not new. It is startling that students with potential learning disabilities are waiting up to, in some cases, three-and-a-quarter years for a psychological assessment. We're actually hearing that some Islanders have waited as many as six years to have their child assessed. That's shameful.

One of the problems is that we really don't know. We seem to get a wide array of figures especially from our government. They differ greatly from those we hear from various groups and concerned citizens.

The minister in this government is adept at manoeuvring figures and spinning details to paint a picture that often bears no resemblance to the reality that is being faced by Islanders in terms of their health care system.

That is why we need to talk to our frontline workers and that is why we need them to be able to appear at public meetings to tell us what's happening without fear of reprisal.

It is time Islanders heard the truth and government accepted the truth. It was more than 10 years ago when the Liberal Government was elected on a promise of a doctor for every Islander. It was about the same time Islanders were told there would be no HST. I will say one thing about the government: it is great at making promises and never keeping them.

The government told Islanders schools would not close. We know what happened –

**Ms. Biggar:** We didn't.

**Leader of the Opposition:** I am sorry, I am not digressing. You're talking about 2017 and the lack of physicians and health care professionals at every level of our health care system.

Here it is, 2017. The last I heard, officially, was that there was something like 7,000-plus on the patient registry. I'm told by health officials that it's actually more like 18,000 Islanders, right now, without a family doctor.

A large reason for the disparaging in those numbers is quite often when a doctor is leaving or retiring from their practice, the patients are sent a letter and they're told not to call to go on the patient registry, that there is a new doctor being recruited, or there is a locum coming in to look after that practice.

In quite a few cases that I've heard, these patients that are waiting and waiting are waiting for three, four, five, six years without a family doctor. If we wanted to get a true barometer of what's happening here on the Island, I think every Islander without a family doctor should be told to put their name on the patient registry.

Again, this is why we need to talk to the health care officials, to the physicians, to the nurses. How many patients, who are attending walk-in clinics actually have doctors? And if they have a doctor, why haven't they been able to access their own doctor?

Our walk-in clinics turn away hundreds of patients every night and on the weekends. They simply cannot handle the huge line-ups that see patients waiting, literally, hours to see a walk-in physician.

I believe that if physicians are given a chance they can help come up with improvements and efficiencies in dealing with their patients. Most carry very heavy case loads. Some with over 2,000 patients. It is encouraging to see some improvements are being discussed in terms of prescribing of drugs that allows pharmacists to prescribe certain drugs.

The point is, that many times, patients need to see their doctor. If they end up in a walk-

in clinic, they do receive excellent care. However, if follow-up with your doctor is advised, that's where the breakdown most often occurs because often that does not happen.

Without the consistent care and follow-up, their next appearance with the medical system may be in hospital for an emergency. I, for one, would love to talk to our physicians about how we can do better.

For instance, some physicians will only see a patient now for one complaint. Why? I think it's because they have too many patients to see. So the patient may have a severe cough, sore throat and a bladder infection. Chances are the patient is going to seek treatment for the most uncomfortable of the symptoms and hope that the rest will go away.

There has to be a better way. I'm sure the physician would like to have time to help this patient, but they have hundreds of other patients to see. Some that have just been admitted to the hospital and need to see them there. The situation, overall, is stressful on all concerned and does not provide good health care. We do need to do better.

We know that there are several physicians who are over retirement age and wanting to retire. They are staying on to help out a few days per week, but they can't do this forever. They have too heavy patient loads, and seeing them on a part-time basis helps, but is not good for the overall health care system.

We need to be talking to our retiring physicians, and to their experiences and how things could have been and should have been done better. The situation is further complicated by the large number of newcomers and their families who are coming to our province and have difficulty speaking English.

We have heard from physicians at walk-in clinics who find it very concerning when they try and diagnose an illness and help these newcomer patients. Again, the physician finds themselves having to spend a much longer time to address the patient's health care concerns and conditions. Is there a way perhaps that interpreters or physicians

and nurses that speak the language could be engaged to assist in special clinics, or practices? Let's have an open discussion and find out.

Again, we need to be talking about these shifts in the culture of our population base to meet the health care needs of all Islanders, including our new immigrants. I know there are very highly skilled health care professionals who have come to our province from other countries, who, unfortunately, cannot find work because at this time, perhaps their credentials don't quite match up, or their English isn't proficient enough. Perhaps there is a role that they can play in assisting our province to meet these challenges and language barriers.

Our province struggles to bring physicians to our rural areas, and it appears that there are a number of issues that vary from area to area. It seems some issues are related to on-call service, but I believe we need to talk to our rural physicians from every area of the province and find out what's going on. Is it the lack of medical equipment, or mentorship, and supports? We need to hear from these physicians so we know what is going on and what we can do better.

I want to hear what their experience here has been. What is lacking? How can we help them? What are the problems in O'Leary, Western Hospital, Tyne Valley, Souris and Montague? Let's talk to our nurses, the physicians, our lab technologists, our surgeons, our specialists, our home care workers in various areas. Are our EMS workers happy with the way things are going? What do they see is wrong and how can we help them help us?

I believe that it is time we started listening to our frontline workers. We know our lab technologists are struggling to cope with increased demands for automatic screening for various conditions. We have severe nursing shortages. Mona O'Shea just had an opinion piece in *The Guardian* the other day talking about the large number of vacant RN positions here on PEI.

Again, let's hear from our frontline health care workers. How can we make their lives better and thus improve health care outcomes here on the Island?

We have talked at length about the need for more psychologists and psychiatrists in our province. It is time we talk directly to these individuals, because obviously, they have a story that needs to be heard. What are their concerns?

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

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. Dumville:** Sorry, my apologies.

**Mr. LaVie:** Not hard to point him out.

**Leader of the Opposition:** What are their concerns, and how can we help address them?

This government has been responding with knee-jerk reactions, without truly looking for alternatives and solutions. We are now in a situation where the QEH is shutting down beds in our mental health unit because of a lack of psychiatrists. This is deplorable.

We have our new mental health clinics, which we understand are little more than a source of reference, and we have no one to refer our patients to. The minister is quoted as stating in the media: The situation is, we don't have enough significant coverage to do rounds and do inpatient bed services, as well as provide all the other primary services that are required in psychiatry.

We have heard that one of the primary problems in increasing the number of psychologists is that the province does not offer a competitive wage. This government just announced a \$134 million Capital Budget, which includes a replacement for the Hillsborough Hospital, which I do applaud. However, opposition has been urging you to take action on a new facility for years and I am happy that this government has finally put it in the Capital Budget. However, a new facility will not be much good if we don't have the psychiatrists and the psychologists to staff it.

While beds are shut down in hospitals across our province, clinics cancelled due to a lack of physicians, patients suffer. This government needs to help fix our broken health care system and it's not all about money and additional staff. I believe we can get much needed help from frontline

workers who experience the frustration daily of trying to do the best they can in what, essentially, is a dysfunctional health care system.

I ask for the support of his Legislative Assembly for our motion so we can find out from our healthcare providers the issues, and concerns and ideas for solutions. It is not a quick fix we're looking for here, but we have had consultants' reports, study after study, review after review, and nothing seems to get done. Let's see what the people who actually work in our system have to say. Let's look at their ideas and recommendations. Let's have an open dialogue, one that is transparent and painfully honest. Let's stop the hiding. This truly is an issue that goes beyond politics.

We can work together to solve these problems. Let's make this an Island-wide collaborative effort. Let's do better, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**Speaker:** Next speaking to the motion will be the seconder of the motion, the hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid.

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

I am proud to second our opposition motion because I believe this is one of the only ways we are going to deal with the current crisis in our health care system, is to talk to people who work in our system at every level. I applaud the Leader of the Opposition for showing leadership on this file. I know he's dealt with this for a long time, and I know this is what many of our health care workers are telling him.

We are proposing a province-wide conversation. It might take a while, but I think it's going to be very productive. We're looking for open and honest dialogue, and it is vitally important that the government supports this dialogue and ensures that health care workers who do take up our challenge and offer their ideas and recommendations are not penalized, but they're rather celebrated, for speaking up and providing help.

This government was elected over 10 years ago on a promise of improved services for rural health care. I couldn't help when the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the famous promise from 10 years ago, a doctor for every Islander, and how often I still hear that today. When we make these promises we expect people to follow up on them.

We know what has not happened. We saw the exact opposite as emergency rooms were extracted from hospitals and several are now essentially long term care facilities in our province. Perhaps this is why it is so difficult to recruit rural physicians to our rural communities.

The physician compliment for Tyne Valley West is supposed to be 12. Currently, the area is short at least four physicians, and some of those physicians who are working in the area do not have full-time practices. We hear there may be retirements coming. As we know, Dr. Herb Dickieson just retired and while Health PEI is in the process of trying to find a doctor for his patients, they will not be added to the patient registration list until March of 2018.

The West Prince area of our province, we feel, is severely underserved and a number of patients have no family physicians.

The government's own website is currently advertising for four nursing one positions for Western Hospital, and we are hearing that at least five beds may be closed at the Western Hospital until after New Years. In fact, they're closed now and I believe that this is one of the earliest times they've ever closed up there. The emergency room at Western Hospital is supposed to provide emergency room coverage from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., but if a patient comes after 6:00 p.m. they are being sent to Summerside sometimes. The ambulance services in that area often don't even get to Western Hospital. They immediately head to Summerside.

Why these situations are occurring is what we need to be talking about in public. We need to know that we can do better to serve this rural area. I understand that there was a nurse practitioner lined up for the Tyne Valley area that decided – is not with us anymore. So, there's another position that we're lacking. I understand there was supposed to be two people trained for the

area, maybe one for Tyne Valley and one for O'Leary, and they're both being trained in O'Leary. Maybe we just need to train them in other areas so that they will be convinced to stay in those areas.

Both Western Hospital and Community Hospital in O'Leary do not have physiotherapists. The two hospitals share a combined 2.6 full-time-equivalent positions for physio; all of these positions have been vacant since last March. We know Health PEI has been trying to address this concern. But, the bigger question is: Why do we not have them and what kind of impact do these shortages have on patient care? We need to find out what is going on with our specialists in our hospitals because patient care does not suffer and no doubt the other health care partners and physicians in the area must find this situation frustrating. Physiotherapy is crucial to aging Islanders and those who have suffered all kinds of injuries. It is a serious situation when we cannot provide care for Islanders who need these services. What is the impact on their health and recovery?

We understand there's a request for proposals seeking a private company to provide service for up to two years, but no bids are being received. The question is: Why?

In 2016, there were eight physiotherapy graduates and eight are working in private clinics. Why? Again, it appears to be an issue maybe of wages, and we need to talk to these graduates and find out why they did not want to work in our health care system. That's what this motion's all about.

The list of health jobs in the province is startling. It's a very, very heavy list; I could read from here for a while. There's over 50 nursing positions advertised, 32 allied health professional positions listed. That includes everything from child psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, respiratory therapist and a large number of lab technologists.

I have to question why these lists are so long. Why have we fallen so far behind? We need to find out why this has happened, why it keeps happening and why we can't seem to recruit and retain individuals to come to the province. This is why our Legislative

Assembly needs to address this issue, square on, by talking to existing health care professionals.

I'm sure our PC member from the Souris area will have a lot to say about these shortages of physician complement and the deterioration of health care services in the eastern area of the province that is negatively impacting the health care of residents in that area.

The shortage of health care providers in our province means that Islanders requiring surgery are waiting months when they should be waiting weeks. Cataract surgery is another example. We need to address the need for timely surgery through consultation with our surgeons and the frontline workers there.

The current wait time to access emergency services in Summerside, Montague, or Charlottetown can range from two to eight hours. Islanders living in rural PEI must often drive 30 to 90 minutes to access these emergency services, and this travel time can be increased significantly in inclement weather.

The lack of services in rural communities in PEI puts an additional strain on larger hospitals including the PCH, Kings County Memorial, and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown, especially for the emergency room departments.

We know that there are high burnout rates for overworked workers, specialists, oncologists, psychiatrists, nurses in all of our province, including in Charlottetown. We just had a meeting with a group of health care professionals that – we're not asking people all the time when they leave or why are they leaving? Are we doing exit interviews? Are we talking about the scope of practice?

We believe government can do better and I suspect that many of our frontline workers can help tell us what's wrong and offer great ideas on how to help fix this system.

I know of an individual, or we've heard of an individual, who lives in O'Leary that has to travel to Alberton every day for a service that could be easily provided by a nurse in O'Leary. This requires her to be on the

highway in the worst of storms because she needs this service daily, a blood test.

We spend huge dollars on off-Island health care for our citizens but we know that facilities like the QEII in Halifax are experiencing their own overcrowding situations. We need to talk to those involved in providing our specialist service off-Island and address their concerns. Basically, how can our province ensure that we can access the care that Islanders need without clogging up the health care systems in other provinces? We also need to ensure that Islanders who return from these hospitals are receiving proper follow-up and care.

I am sure that every member of the Legislative Assembly can tell stories of constituents and family members who did not have access to care that should have been available to them. We hear these stories every day. We feel their frustration, their anger, and their heartbreak. So let's let them talk.

I want to give you a perfect example of that. A number of the MLAs from the government side, the health minister, the education minister, the Leader of the Third Party and myself, we were just at the psychology association with a group meeting. Wonderful group, a good meeting, good information back from the ministers as well. We got clarification on a number of things. We've got some good data going forward. I thought it was fairly productive; but I'll tell you what: What concerns me is that, to me, it felt like it was the first time that we were in the room with that group.

If I was the minister, that'd be the group that I'd be wanting to talk to right off the bat. Those are the people that I'd be wanting to talk about. I'm glad that we had the meeting and I'm glad that they informed us, but I was surprised when I got there that that felt like it was the first time that we were all talking about this.

I hope that's not the case. I hope that the ministers are more forthright in meeting with them and talking with them. This would be the first group that I'd be talking to.

Anyway, again, I'd like to congratulate the hon. Leader of the Opposition on bringing

this forward. Let's do better. Let's hear from our health care providers, and I would ask everybody for your support on this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Podium?

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

This is a motion dear to my heart, one that I have been speaking on now for six years. Never got any better in the last six years.

**An Hon. Member:** What? Come on.

**Mr. Henderson:** (Indistinct) doctors going to Souris.

**Mr. LaVie:** Just promised more doctors, promised more doctors –

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

**Mr. LaVie:** – promised more doctors –

**Mr. Henderson:** Best response times on the Island.

**Mr. LaVie:** – three times. Three times now.

We were promised the last election four doctors by this Premier, by this Premier. Four doctors, a complement of four doctors during the campaign.

When you talk promises, my blood pressure rises. I ran in two elections now – 2011, 2015. One promise, I only made one promise in two elections, and that's to be a voice for the people of District 1, and that I am, and that I will continue to do.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** I will not make a promise I can't keep. I'll do that for the people.

When the Premier did roll in with his staff, he never invited me. Didn't want me there, didn't want my opinion, really didn't want anybody's opinion. Actually, I don't feel bad. I don't think the minister of health at

the time was invited to the announcement. I believe that. Yeah, he wasn't.

But, he didn't want anybody else's opinion. It was his. It was all about him, and people trusted him. Here is a voice that was going to be different for the people. Here's our man for PEI. Boy, that was a huge disappointment for people in District 1.

My blood pressure gets high talking about this because I've been talking to this issue six years now. I believe every man; woman and child in Prince Edward Island should have a doctor. They are entitled to that. That's one thing we should be entitled to, doctors.

I hear it every day. There are issues every day, and every one of you has got the same issues in doctors. I hear – as of yesterday, issues of no doctors. We have people sick with no doctors. We actually have people sick with no doctors, and seriously sick. These are people that are dying with no doctor. They deserve a doctor. Everybody deserves a doctor on Prince Edward Island, and I'm a firm believer in that.

If I was running for a leadership for a party, that's one thing I will put in my platform.

**Ms. Biggar:** You're the next one, are you?

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

**Mr. LaVie:** That was something I'd put in my platform, is a doctor for every Islander.

Six years now. I can understand the minister's there for a year, half a year, six months, but we've been talking for this for six years now, just while I'm here. That's not before me.

That's six years I've been fighting for the people to get a doctor. Now, you had six years to do it. You have no plan. Lots of studies. You don't have a plan for health care on PEI. What do we do, or you do? We just keep firing money at health care. Fire money at it. Fire money at it. We keep firing money at it. Oh, it's going to cost us 640 million this year.

**Mr. Henderson:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** It's going to cost us 700 million next year.

**Mr. Henderson:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** We know how much it's going to cost. Let's have a plan. Let's make a plan.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Where do we want to be.

We have lots of plans, but that's six years ago I hear about this plan. Six years is way too long to be hearing the same promises – and that's just the doctor promises. That's just no plan for in health care.

The people in Eastern Kings – probably right across the province – were happy with a nurse practitioner; nobody was complaining. We had two doctors, we had two nurse practitioners. Nobody was complaining – never heard a word. But you're not happy. You've got to have people upset all the time. So, what do you do? You take one of the nurse practitioners – go, we don't need you up here – go. Then you get the people upset again. Why didn't you just leave the nurse practitioner there?

You have doctors. You have two doctors. The Premier promised four doctors. You have two. So there's people with no doctor. There's people with no nurse practitioner now, but people weren't saying nothing because they love their nurse practitioners – they get along good with their nurse practitioners – they're great and we had two of them, but you weren't happy – you took one away and then you get everybody talking and buzzed – the buzz is up again – the coffee shops are talking and my phone starts ringing, your phone starts ringing, everybody's phone starts ringing.

So, I had a meeting with the minister of health.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah I did. Sat down.

**Mr. Henderson:** (Indistinct) Souris (Indistinct) toured your hospital.

**Mr. LaVie:** You did tour the hospital. Actually, the last minister of health wouldn't tour the hospital.

**An Hon. Member:** Can you bring two doctors?

**Mr. LaVie:** He's gone and guess what?

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

**Mr. LaVie:** You're next.

But you never really sat down with the staff and asked where we can improve.

**Mr. Henderson:** Yes, we asked (Indistinct) every person we went to.

**Mr. LaVie:** No you didn't.

Nope. You never really sat down because I was with you. You had a great tour. You loved the hospital – it's a nice, clean hospital. I've got to give them credit. You've got to give the staff real credit for that hospital. That's a clean, clean hospital.

You hear that, not only in my district, you hear that right across Canada about our hospital in Souris. It's got – right across Canada; people are talking about how clean it is, how friendly the staff is, how great the food is. Actually, I had a couple of lunches there myself and it is – it's good.

But no, on a serious note, I really think that every man, woman, and child on Prince Edward Island deserve a doctor – that's one thing we do deserve, that's a doctor. We make sure our children have school teachers, let's make sure everybody has a doctor. We've got to work out a plan – it's got to be a plan and we've got to work toward everybody having a doctor. And you know, Mrs. Speaker –

You know, never noticed you.

**Deputy Speaker:** Madam.

**Mr. LaVie:** Madam Speaker, sorry. So long since I said Madam Speaker.

**Mr. LaVie:** I'm getting a little worried myself, Madam Speaker because I've had my doctor – we'll not say for how long because I don't want to give away my age,

but I've had him for quite some time now and I'm getting a little worried that he's getting to the age where he wants to enjoy the rest of his life and retire and I'm worried, myself, that there's more people without a doctor. Because my doctor was in Souris and he moved to Montague and he took a lot of followers with him – a lot, a lot of followers with him. I'm glad I did that at the time, I just wanted to make sure I had a doctor. I had to have a doctor. That's one thing you do – I don't use a doctor very often. I probably see a doctor once every two years. I just had my checkups done, so I probably won't see him for a while and actually, when I call to make an appointment, I'm a little nervous that I'm still a patient or not. That's how often he sees me.

That's one of my worries right now that my doctor will retire and I'll be on a list and I don't want to be on the list for doctors because when I need a doctor, I want a doctor.

You know, what happens – and I've seen it first hand is: when we don't have doctors, we don't have walk-ins. Our walk-ins are very, very few – walk-ins. You always see people on social media looking for walk-ins – wherever the walk-ins are and some people come right into Charlottetown and some people just bypass Charlottetown altogether and go right to Summerside.

I have been in emergency rooms in Montague with people sick and you kind of want to go in and sit down and not say too much and kind of look at the wall because you don't want people to notice you because – I couldn't believe it but some people are there – and this is not a lie from me either – 10 hours or longer. Because we went there one day in the afternoon with a six hour wait and this lady beside us was the first one there in morning with her boy who had a broken leg and got in just before us, around 10:30 at night. Imagine that boy sitting around all day with a broken leg – and he walked on it, actually. He had a bad limp – I didn't know he broke his leg at the time. He did have a bad limp, but that boy was there –

There was another lady there with a baby and if I had of known, that baby should have went ahead of us. That's would have been a must – babies first. I never picked up on that

because the room was split and she was on the outside and we're on the inside – never noticed it. That baby – that should have been a must because when that baby did go in, it was asleep in his mother's arms. I'm glad the baby was asleep because then he wasn't in pain. Earlier he was crying, but that baby should have been taken right in ASAP.

I know there was another couple came in from our community – this is what happens when we have no doctors, we flood the emergency rooms. We're flooding the emergency rooms with no walk-ins. These doctors are getting overworked in the emergency rooms and then the emergency room in Montague closes at 10:00 p.m. at night – closes – and then we flood Charlottetown and it's just a domino effect. We've got a domino effect going. We haven't got a plan to – it's been ongoing now for six years and we haven't got a plan to fix this.

I've been here six years and the same issues are here. We're not gaining. We're not gaining. Yeah, we're spending more money, but we're not gaining. There was nights we only had one ambulance from Bonshaw to East Point – one ambulance – to cover the whole district. We're not gaining. We buy more ambulances. We bought fast response rigs, is what we bought. Yes, that took the pressure of us, the fire departments, but we should have bought more ambulances and put them in use.

Let's stop this time. Let's put everything on hold and have a plan in our health care system.

We have got good people in our health care system. Somebody should be able to stop and think, you know, we took our health boards out of the communities. That was a big loss to the communities, big loss to the communities when we did that. It took our voice away. We had a voice at one time. You know who to call in your community when you had an issue.

We've had public meetings. I know the last minister, God bless him. He'd come to our public meetings and he took her head on, but he was good enough to come to them meetings. He wanted to hear it head on, he didn't want to hear it secondhand. He was good enough to come into our community

and come to the meetings and listen to 500 and 600 people roaring and screaming. Boys, the boxing gloves are on. He didn't realize there were that many fighters up home. But, he came. He strolled into town. He didn't turn back.

The shortage in long-term care beds. We hear it. We hear it all the time: The shortage in beds, long-term, and we do.

You know the lack of affordable housing. So, here's another one. When we take away the doctors and the services in rural communities everyone tends to move into the large communities like the centre, Charlottetown, and that's fair. That's where the services are. This is where the doctors are. They think this is where the housing is until they get here and we haven't got the housing for them. We haven't got the doctors for them. We haven't got the emergency rooms for them. We're causing a problem in our larger communities.

People are moving out of the rural districts because look at their new map that's coming out. The east and the west are moving toward the centre. That shows me that people are leaving the rural communities. Ain't I right?

People are leaving and they're not putting people back in there. You're putting people in your city and you're flooding it. You're flooding your city. Your roads won't take it. Your hospital won't take it. Your schools won't take it, and you don't see it. You're not seeing it. Am I not right?

You have got emergency rooms in it – we have a beautiful hospital in here. Beautiful hospital, but you've got it overloaded. You got the pressure on it. Why? Because you're taking everything from the east and the west, the rural and you're putting it in the centre, and you're overloading it.

Put some of that stuff back into the rural. Put your health cares back out there. Put your boards back out there. Give it back to the people. Bring the people to us. Let's not work against the people. Let's have a plan here.

Don't tell me you have a plan. I've been here six years and it's the same one. It's the

same plan, just a different cook; different chef. That's all we've got.

**An Hon. Member:** Recipe.

**Mr. LaVie:** Recipe is the same: Danger. Danger recipe. It's going to blow up, though. This recipe is going to blow up. There's too much heat on it. Too much pressure on it. We're putting the pressure on it, whether we see it or not. We are. It's a matter of time before it's going to happen. It's just a matter of time before this happens.

What do we do? We'll have a Cabinet shuffle. We'll start all over again. I've seen that. I tried to – we saw that with elections. No, you ain't got much time left because your time is getting short. We'll have a Cabinet shuffle here and we're going to have to start all over again and I'll make the same old speech over again and I'll be here for 12 years –

**Mr. Henderson:** (Indistinct) you come to this side (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** – and I finally got the doctors –

**Mr. Henderson:** Come across.

**Mr. LaVie:** – we needed.

**Mr. Henderson:** Come to this side.

**Mr. LaVie:** I'll be there.

**Mr. Henderson:** Oh (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** I'll be there in April.

**Mr. Henderson:** Goes back to (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** I'll be there in April. Next election, I'll be there.

You know, the shortage of psychiatrists we have. There is another new – that's not new to us. That's not a new issue: Psychiatrists.

The problems with mental health across this province is not a good situation. It's not. I've talked to this, actually, when I was first elected. It's getting worse. I'm serious. This is a situation we have got to get a handle on. We have got to get a fix on it. We have got to get as much help out there as we can on the ground to help these people. This is a

serious, serious issue. I can't speak for everyone in here, but we're pretty near touched by either family, friends, people we know, people we don't know, but we're all touched in here by mental illness, or going to be touched.

I'm touched big time by it. Big time. I had an uncle take his own life in 1972, 39 years old. My father never ever talked about it. His only brother; never, ever talked about it. Never. But, he should have. The family didn't talk about it, but they should have. Back in the 1970s it was a problem. Probably before that, but back in the 1970s, that's when it started for me. He wasn't very old, and never ever talked about it. It's like it didn't happen. There wasn't a problem, but there is a problem.

The worst nightmare a father could ever have. The worst nightmare any parent could ever have; any family member get in the middle of a night is a call from a son or daughter and tell them that they tried to take their own lives.

I'm glad I got that phone call because if I hadn't had gotten to the phone call, the situation would have been worse. I'm glad I got the call from her. I'm 84 KM away, but it didn't take me an hour to get here either. I won't say how long it took me to get here. That's the calls you don't want to get.

I know what mental health is like across Prince Edward Island. I'm a survivor myself. I don't often talk about it. Maybe I should. Not maybe I should, I should. When you talk the time has got to be right, the situation has got to be the right place, and surrounded by the right people.

I do know I lost friends, family. It's a situation we do not want to be in. It's a situation we've got to get under control, and get it under control fast. People are depending on us. We're leaders. People are depending on us for answers. We're the leaders. Sometimes we have to make decisions. We have to make decisions. I heard it in the committee meetings. We've heard from people. We heard the stories, and some of them are not very good stories; sad. I can relate with these people. I know where these people are coming from. I've been down the road.

My opinion and my opinion only: Making marijuana legal, we're going to pay the price. Remember I said that in 10 or 15 years' time. I hope we don't. But, the era I grew up in, this is not going to be good. It's all about the money. Money is what it is. When it comes down to it, how much money will we actually make off marijuana? How much money do we actually make off of liquor, if it comes down to it? By the time we have police force, by the time we have addictions, hospitals, and jail times – how much do we actually make off these liquors and marijuana? You take it in one hand, take it out of the pocket and put it in the other pocket.

**Mr. Henderson:** (Indistinct) prohibition again?

**Mr. LaVie:** Just a circulation.

**Mr. Henderson:** Prohibition.

**Mr. LaVie:** Then, look at the sick people we have. That's what we've got to look at. Look at the sick people.

I might be wrong, but when kids or anybody try a drug they get high. They get a nice feeling; a real nice feeling, and they keep trying to get that feeling and they can never have that feeling again. What they do, they try more drugs, harder drugs; different drugs and what happens, they get themselves in a situation they can't get out of. It's not their fault. It's the addiction. It's that addiction. That addiction could be alcohol, or drugs, or any addiction out there. It's their addiction, of their choice. That's what happens. In my opinion, that's how they get themselves into this situation. It's hard to get them out of that situation. We just can't take them out of that situation. That situation has to be theirs alone. That decision has to be theirs, to come out of that situation.

That's where it all comes back to your doctors, your affordable housing, your psychiatrists. It all comes back.

The reason I stand here today is we did have an addiction facility in my district and any addiction facility in any rural area, in my view, is the best thing for Prince Edward Island. What happens in these addiction centres, everybody knows everybody. In PEI, pretty near everybody is related to

everybody. So, everybody knows everybody and everybody is friends with everybody. I know a lot of people in Kings County, Queens County and Prince County, so if someone came into my community with an addiction problem and went to the addiction centre, and the workers there mention my name to that fellow, he'd know me or I'd know them and there would be a visit.

Yes, I'm surprised no one said it, but our government did shut it down.

**Mr. R. Brown:** (Indistinct) easy on you.

**Mr. MacKay:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** That's why I'm standing here today. I wasn't in favour of what my government did of the day. I wasn't in favour of what this government is doing, but I'm not one of these guys to complain, growl, chew. I'll join a team and help the cause, if I can. I'll join a team. There's no sense in complaining if you're not going to do something about it. Am I right?

**An Hon. Member:** Yeah.

**Mr. LaVie:** So, that's what I did. I joined a team.

It was serious. I was there when they closed our emergency room. I was one of the guys at the door. I couldn't get in. The place was full. The place was packed at the Parish Hall, closed our emergency room. I was there. I wasn't in favour of it. My government did it, but I wasn't in favour of it. But, there's no sense saying anything if you're not going to do something about it. I saw the opportunity and I said: Enough is enough. I'll join a team. I was no part of a team; I was no member of a team. I didn't even know how a team worked, unless it was a hockey team, and there I was the leader with a pair of skates on; tie my skates, it's just like cutting the circulation off, just like a Bobby Orr.

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

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

**Mr. LaVie:** On a serious note, we've got some serious issues when it comes down to health care. The doctors are a big one. Everybody on PEI, man, woman and child,

should have a doctor. You should have a plan for a doctor. Everybody deserves a doctor at some point.

Everybody hears it, just like I do: There are people out there – there are people pregnant, no doctor. There are people with brain damage, no doctor. There are people with cancer, no doctor. These people are struggling. These people have got records coming back. Coming back to where? Like, these people are coming into the Charlottetown hospital and they're saying: Who is your family physician? Well, I haven't got one. I haven't got one. That's getting old. That's getting old. That's six years old now with me. I haven't got a doctor. Come on. Let's make a plan here. Let's have a plan.

I speak on this every year, and I shouldn't have to. I can see it taking a year, but not six years. It shouldn't take people six years to have a doctor. That worries me.

There are seniors moving out of their district into this district because they haven't got a doctor. Our seniors haven't got doctors. Now, our seniors are the people that gave us what we have today. They gave us our halls. They gave us our local rinks. They gave us our schools. They gave us our churches. They kept it going for us.

When I get to be a senior, I've got a ways to go, yet. I want to make sure I have a doctor. I don't –

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

**Mr. LaVie:** – have to be worried. I want to make sure I have a house. I want to make sure I have a house, you know.

From here going forward, let's make a plan and talk serious because we have some serious issues coming up. We have got some serious issues to debate inside this rail. Mental health is a real, serious issue facing us today.

It's like, we had a police officer in our schools. Well, I thought that was the best thing –

**An Hon. Member:** Nurses –

**Mr. LaVie:** – since sliced bread.

**An Hon. Member:** Put nurses in your school.

**Mr. LaVie:** That police officer worked with each and every student. He had the trust of those students. You know, we cut that. We keep cutting. It's all about money. It's all about the money. When are we going to start worrying about the people? The kids? Our future? We cut, oh my God, if you want me to start – I haven't got time to get –

**Mr. Myers:** Oh, you have time.

**Mr. LaVie:** – into the RCMP part of it –

**Mr. Myers:** You have time.

**Mr. LaVie:** The places we cut are the most serious places we can cut.

**Mr. MacEwen:** (Indistinct)

**Mr. LaVie:** You know?

**Mr. Myers:** Good RCMP angle, I think.

**Mr. LaVie:** We cut the RCMP out of our schools. I can't speak for every school, but I can speak about my own school because I had one. I had an RCMP in the school. I knew the RCMP officer, became good friends with him.

One thing about the RCMP officers, and this is what we're seeing a change in, RCMP officers used to live in the district. They don't have to anymore. See, that's where the RCMP lost some respect. Not it all, but this is where they lose some respect. They lived in the community, when I grew up, we respected them. They were our next door neighbour.

Thank you.

They were our coaches. They were our friends. At the same time they protected us. They protected us. That's what the RCMP do.

We took that – they don't have to live in our communities anymore. Nobody knows RCMP anymore. We're losing that connection. We're losing that connection. When you lose that connection with the RCMP, he's taken out of the community.

From 3:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. in the morning, or 10:00 a.m. in the morning there's one RCMP officer from Bonshaw to East Point. Now, we have somebody in a mental state in Eastern Kings and he's in Bonshaw and vice versa; can be reversed. That's a serious situation. That's the way it is. We keep cutting our RCMP. We're going to see the effects of that.

The drug squad is cut. What do you call that one? The highway traffic act one is cut. That's great. You cut it and you cut it. Wait until you start seeing the effects of this. It hasn't happened yet, but it's going to.

We're seeing the effects of us cutting doctors, where people have no doctors, because you have got Charlottetown flooded. We're getting everybody moving into Charlottetown. District 27, District 1, is just growing, just growing toward the city because we're losing people. You fellows should be able to see that. If I can see; you fellows should be able to see it.

Let's everyone work together. Work together. We've heard from the people in the committees about mental health, about the doctors, about the RCMP, but here we are again talking about it again. We'll talk about it again if we don't make the plan.

There will be another election some spring. This spring there will be more promises. Look at the promises we have just seen. Time will tell what'll happen with these promises. Things didn't go so well. Maybe the promises won't go so well. Things didn't go the Premier's way.

All I'm saying is: let's have a look health care. Let's not just fire money at health care. Let's have a look at it. Let's have a look at our RCMP. RCMP, they're a part of this program when it comes to mental health. Imagine what these poor RCMP officers go through, or city. City is the same. We call them officers, but out in rural we're losing officers. We are losing officers.

That's when you talk about the Three Rivers coming together. I'd be worried out my way about all the communities coming together. What will happen to the RCMP detachment up there? Will we keep it? These are the questions that are not getting answered for

the people. These are the questions that people want answered.

What happens to the station, the RCMP station in Montague? Does it get moved up to Souris? No, will there be one? Will there be three? Maybe Murray Harbour will have their own; Murray River. These are the questions people want answered before we form these communities, but nobody is answering these questions.

It all has a major, major role to play. Round tables, been there, heard them. Round tables. I like round tables. Great discussions come out of a round table, but you've got to do something with it. When you leave the table it can't be over. You've got to do something with it.

I've been involved in a lot of round tables with a lot of good people; health care providers, frontline workers, RCMP, city, fire departments, fire marshals. Been there, done it. Listened to the people. Sometimes, we've got to make decisions and harsh decisions, and it can't be all about the dollar. It has got to be about people. Let's not make it about money.

Look, if every man, woman, and child on Prince Edward Island had a doctor, do you think I would be worried about a balanced budget? I wouldn't care about a balanced budget. People would have a doctor. Kids would have a doctor. God almighty.

You see it on social media all the time; people looking for a walk-in clinic: Where can I find a walk-in clinic? We can't be making it dollars and cents. We have to make people happy. That's what we should be doing as leaders. That's why we're elected. Let's put the people ahead of ourselves. Put the people first. Do you know how happy people would be, kids would be if they were going to school tomorrow morning on the school bus and saying: I've got a doctor. Everybody's got a doctor. Do you know how happy they'd be?

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

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah.

I'm very serious when it comes to this because I've been talking about this for a long time. This is one that is dear to my

heart, is health care. Every year our health care is getting worse. We think it's getting better, but yeah it's up to 640 million or 700 million, it's going to go to 100 million here in 2020. What difference? People need to be looked after. We have to have a plan. We have to have a plan for these people. We can't be all about us.

It was over 10 years ago when the first promise came out: A doctor for every Islander. That's 10 years ago. 10 years ago; two premiers ago, or three premiers ago, three health ministers ago, two elections ago for me and every election is that promise right there: A doctor for every Islander. Four in District 1; four doctors, and the people believed them when they strolled into Souris. People actually believed him, even his own people. I heard it all before, so I knew what I was in for. We're talking about 2017. I was first elected in 2011 and the lack of physicians and health care professionals at every level of our health care system – it shouldn't be that way.

I had a surgery, actually I had numerous surgeries, and I had a surgeon that I trusted to replace one of my shoulders; full replacement. He operated on my right shoulder last September. After the operation he retired. I had his trust. I had numerous operations on my shoulders from hard labour, hard work over the years taking its toll. He retired after the last operation. I was disappointed. I had a great relationship with him. I could trust him. Actually, his wife was from my community in Souris, so I had that close relationship. We knew him. But, he retired. He never really said the reasons, but I could see it. I could see why; a lot of pressure on them. There's a lot of pressure on these guys.

I agree, it's a different world today. Doctors don't work like they used to, and I understand that. We don't work like we used to. We don't work with a horse and sleigh anymore. We work with booms and hydraulics, and we don't work like we used to. Doctors shouldn't have to work like they used to either. They're on a schedule now. They want a family life. They deserve that. They deserve it.

Getting back to the pressure we put on them, we have a lovely hospital here in Charlottetown; lovely, a beautiful hospital.

Beautiful doctors, beautiful nurses, everybody cleaning. It's a clean hospital. But, we've got the pressure on it. We've got too much pressure on it. Not only do we have the pressure on the hospital, we've got the pressure on our senior housing in here because we don't have a plan. We're putting everybody in the city. We've got no housing, no roads, no hospital and no schools, and no plan.

There's got to be a plan, guys, to take care of this. Somebody has got to start thinking because she's going to crash and it's going to crash, and we're going to hear the crash. The boundaries are going to keep moving toward the city, and we see it. Look at where my boundaries went. We've got to take note.

The traffic pressure, we've got pressure on the roads. We haven't got the RCMP to take care of our roads, watch our roads and we know it. We're cutting back the most important part of PEI; our health care is suffering, education is suffering, RCMP is suffering and no plan. Suffering; we're suffocating. PEI is suffocating. We're going to need our lifejackets.

I believe the physicians are given a chance to come up with some improvements, efficiencies in dealing with their patients. Let's hear it from the physicians. Go out to rural PEI, randomly. Just ask a physician and see what they have to say. Go to your nurses, just randomly, and see what they have to say. Give them a chance. Don't fire them, just give them a chance. I speak to them. I spoke to nurses. But, these nurses got their fingers slapped from me speaking to them. That is very unfair in these situations, and that has happened in two situations. I went to my hospital and talked to the nurses and they got their fingers slapped: Wrong. Not only in PEI and Canada, that's wrong. You fellows are wrong. You fellows haven't got a plan.

In closing, I hope the minister of health has been listening. Put a plan in place. Work the plan. Don't have me here in 2018 speaking that the women and men and children in PEI haven't got a doctor. Don't let me say that in 2018. Let's be a leader. Be the leader. Take leadership in this. Sit down at the table every day if you have to, minister, every day and talk. I'll travel PEI with you if you can get everyone doctor, man, woman, and

child. I'll make every stop with you if you can make that happen. I'll be happy to do that because that would make me so happy, especially with the children – when you see the children sick. Nobody wants to see children sick without a doctor. I know I don't. I don't like to see anybody sick, let alone children.

It's a great motion. I support it. Everybody knows where I stand on it, for sure, especially the people who have been here for the last six years.

**Mr. Myers:** Or the last 20 minutes.

**Mr. LaVie:** Or the last 20 minutes. You know where I stand with this motion on the shortage of doctors. It's dear to my heart, it's close to my heart and I'll have it to my heart until it's resolved, Madame Speaker.

I'd like to adjourn debate on this motion.

Thank you.

**Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

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

#### Orders Other Than Government

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Madame Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the 12<sup>th</sup> order of the day be now read.

**Deputy Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** Order No. 12, *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, Bill No. 100, ordered for second reading.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that the said bill be now read a second time.

**Deputy Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

**Clerk:** *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, Bill No.100, read a second time.

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Tignish-Palmer Road, that this House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole House to take into consideration the said bill.

**Deputy Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Thank you.

Thank you, hon. members, I will now call on the hon. Member from West Royalty-Springvale to come down and Chair the Committee of the Whole House.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Leader of the Opposition:** If we could have just a quick –

**Chair:** Quick overview?

**Leader of the Opposition:** – get some information first and then we'll start on that.

**Chair:** Okay. Is it all right to bring a stranger on the floor?

Granted.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Thank you.

**Chair:** Would you state your name in full for the community members, please?

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** Joanne MacKinnon, legislative assistant for the Office of the Third Party.

**Chair:** Hon. member if you'll get an overview of your bill, please?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Sure.

Thank you, Chair.

This amendment will provide basic whistleblower protection to workers in the private sector. We thought, in our office, this would make a good compliment to government's public sector whistleblowing legislation, which was introduced in the spring.

Currently employees in Prince Edward Island are only protected from reprisals if they report violations in the *Employment Standards Act* or the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. I think all workers should be protected whenever they have the courage to come forward and report wrongdoings.

Indeed, we all know the news of the last few days; the vulnerability of workers when faced with potential wrongdoing in the workplace was brought home to me again when I read the article in *The Guardian* that discussed certain alleged abuses of the PN Program and although the affected students would receive a certain amount of protection if they reported their violations under the *Employment Standards Act*, they would not be able to report violations of any other laws without risk of being dismissed.

So, this is a very timely bill and in preparing this bill, we issued a discussion paper, we sought input from the minister in the department, the deputy minister, various community organizations, unions, the business association. This has been widely distributed for public input and we've received nothing back other than positive feedback.

That's what this bill is about.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you very much for bringing this bill on, hon. member. Just to have a question on your last comment there that you had a lot of public engagement; in your discussion paper that we've received this morning there – we got it around 11:30 a.m., there was also some information of support from two organizations and one individual.

Is that what you're referring to with your – you had a lot of public consultation?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** We sent it out to many more people than that and I can give you the whole list here: the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning, Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce – there's about 12 organizations on this list. We did not receive feedback for all of them, but yourself and your deputy minister would have received it not just this morning, but maybe two months ago? Would that be –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** October 2<sup>nd</sup>, I think.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** October the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Mr. Gallant:** Now, in one of them, they were concerned that maybe your legislation should be beefed up – that there should be an internal process first before it goes any further than that?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I don't recall that.

**Mr. Gallant:** Would you give that any consideration?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I'm sorry. Which reply? Erin McGrath-Gaudet's?

**Mr. Gallant:** Yes, it is, yeah.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes.

She was actually very supportive and the only suggestion she had was to change the order of the report – the body to which the person would report and we actually included that. We adjusted the bill accordingly. The only suggestion she had, we incorporated.

**Mr. Gallant:** So you beefed up your legislation to the expectation that employees follow internal reporting procedures prior to external reporting?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I'm sorry. I just need to find that, minister on the –

**Mr. Gallant:** Because that was the only recommendation she had. As you say, she was in favour of it, but that was a concern she had.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yeah, I'm sure.

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** In response to Ms. McGrath-Gaudet's recommendations, what we did do was change the order of the definitions of legal authorities so that we placed immediate supervisor in advance of law enforcement; however, it does not actually indicate that a complainant would have to respond in that order. Even in her own letter she indicated that it's not always practical to go to your immediate supervisor, especially in instances where there could be criminal code violations, where evidence could be tampered with or destroyed – because you've alerted your employer that you intend to report the wrongdoings.

So, that way we put greater emphasis on using internal mechanisms first, but there's actually no requirement within the bill that you have to consult first internally within the organization.

**Mr. Gallant:** If you had a contractor that reported an infraction against a firm that he was doing work for, how would you deal with that? You know?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes.

**Chair:** Minister, could you speak up? They can't hear you on this other side of the room.

**Mr. Gallant:** What happens if a contractor reports an infraction? Are they protected from losing their contract with the firm they were doing the work for?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** No. This is just for individual employees, not for corporations or companies.

**Mr. Gallant:** You also indicated in your discussion paper that there's only two jurisdictions. Could you explain a little bit about that, why these two jurisdictions have it and no other jurisdictions in the country do? Saskatchewan and New Brunswick are the only two.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I would like to think that they are the more progressive jurisdictions – and indeed Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. Every province has public whistleblower protection, and we – well, Prince Edward Island is in the process of adopting that now.

Only two provinces have private whistleblower protection; however, there are certain protections in every jurisdiction for private workers, but those are the only two provinces where there is a blanket protection, which I think is the way we should go. I don't see why workers in the private sector should not have the same protections and coverage as the workers in the public sector do.

**Mr. Gallant:** So under this bill, how would a person go about reporting wrongdoing, like internally, for the internal process?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Well, that would depend on the nature of the violation. As Jo said, there may be times when reporting to a supervisor is neither sensible or even possible; but that would be, in most cases I would imagine the preferred route, but again it would depend on the circumstances of the violation.

**Mr. Gallant:** I have some more other questions now, I don't –

**Chair:** Okay. I'll come back to you, Minister.

**Mr. Gallant:** Okay.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** Thank you.

Just in regard to reporting is where I was going to go with this as well. Have you had discussions with police agencies, enforcement agencies? Like if it's something that would be applicable to them, or who – if I'm not comfortable going to report something to my employer, what's my recourse?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Well, an appropriate agency would be the RCMP or a police force of some kind; so yes, absolutely. We did not contact them, but certainly that is one of the agencies that would be an appropriate place to go.

**Chair:** Continue, Minister.

**Ms. Biggar:** So if this were to go through, and this is the reporting agency or agencies, I'm just curious that it would put a lot of

extra responsibility on them to take on those cases. That's why I was wondering if you've had consultation with, whether it's city police or RCMP. So it would be interesting; or the police chiefs association in that regard, that I would think would be good to have some input from them.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Well –

**Ms. Biggar:** Wouldn't you agree?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** The bit that I would not agree with is that this puts a large, new responsibility on them. I mean, that's what law enforcement is there for, to enforce the law, so that this is not something that would be outside of their jurisdiction or outside of something they are comfortable with.

Indeed, in part of our communication, you'll see that there's an aspect of the criminal code which covers people, employers bringing forward complaints. Actually, there has never been, since that was enacted in 2014, I believe –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** 2004.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – 2004, excuse me – there have never been any criminal prosecutions, and that's across Canada. So we're not putting an onerous amount of extra work on our law enforcement agencies in doing this.

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

**Ms. Biggar:** So you don't think it's necessary to even consult with them?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I don't –

**Ms. Biggar:** Is that correct?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Did we send this out to –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** No, we didn't.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** No, we did not send this out to police agencies; but again, I think this is something that they would be familiar with and would not have any issue.

**Chair:** Continue, minister.

**Ms. Biggar:** So you're saying you don't think it's necessary to consult with them.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Not on the content of the bill, no, because it's a piece of legislation which is in keeping with other jurisdictions and I don't think, again, it would bring any onerous responsibilities on them at all.

**Ms. Biggar:** Okay, thank you.

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

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

Just as a practical question, I'm kind of curious as to how you would envision this being enforced. Say somebody is a whistleblower, maybe give me a 'for example' of what would happen and how you see this being –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Sure.

**Mr. J. Brown:** – pertinent legislation.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Okay, well, let's imagine you're working in a convenience store and a minor comes in to purchase cigarettes and one of the people you work with sells them cigarettes. You know that's a violation of a law. You speak to them. They do not alter their behaviour at all, and in the public interest it's something that you feel you should do something more about. You would then go and report that to the appropriate agencies, in this case the RCMP or police. That's an example.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

**Mr. J. Brown:** Chair, if I could – I had a follow-up question on that.

**Chair:** Oh, I'm sorry.

**Mr. J. Brown:** I'm not sure if it's appropriate.

**Chair:** Go ahead, Minister.

**Mr. J. Brown:** I'm just kind of curious. The reason I asked you that question is more related to what we do when we have the legislation there. There would be common law now that would prevent that employer

from firing that employee because of that. We see in your materials that were provided earlier there today; there's criminal code sections.

And so I guess what – and overall I see where you're going and I don't have a material issue with the legislation, but I do take the hon. Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy's point to say: Are we really doing anything additional here, and if we are, should we be talking to whomever we're asking to enforce this that's any different than it is now?

I guess that's the pointed question that I would put to you is the difficulty that I would see as somebody kind of with a legal background in terms of what's there in the common law right now is that it can become difficult.

Like say in your example, you're the gas station attendant that gets dismissed and you might only have been at work for a month or something like that. Were you going to sue your employer for that dismissal? Probably not, because it wouldn't be worth your while to do it.

You may run into the same kind of a situation here unless there's a practical kind of enforcement mechanism that goes along with it as well. In other words, you may have the legislation, but the legislation's only as good as the paper that it's written on if there's not an enforcement mechanism to go along with it.

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** With the criminal code provisions, there are a couple of issues that we identified with them. First, they've never actually been used that we could find. Secondly, the only redress under the criminal code is it's a criminal offence against the employer, which doesn't actually address what the employee may want, which is either appropriate severance pay or to be reinstated in their position.

Again, I'm not a lawyer so I can't speak to this, but my understanding is the burden of proof under a criminal code violation would be much higher, so we really didn't feel that the criminal code provided the adequate and the type of flexible protections that our act envisions.

Using the previous example, after the tobacco enforcement officer from the department of health came and dealt with the violations of selling tobacco, if the employer then assumed that a particular employee was the one that had made the report and dismisses that employee, then the employee can go through the employment standards board like any other employment complaint that would be made under the act because the violation is embedded in the act.

**Chair:** Minister of education, do you have another question?

**Mr. J. Brown:** Yeah, I do.

So I guess what I'm saying is – a few different things I'll set up and kind of try and address things as you did in your comments.

I'd agree there's probably a different standard in terms of making out a criminal complaint than not. There are, in the sentencing provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada, there is the ability to deal with all of those things that you were just talking about. I don't think I'd take that statement at its face value. In other words there would be an ability for a court to, you know, require the, in this case, a convicted person or enterprise to do certain things to give remedy to the victim. The provisions are fairly broad to do that.

In terms of the employment, or the enforcement piece, I think, I guess what I'm saying, I think that that legislation probably already exists in part at this point in time. If you were going to set out that you were unjustly dismissed, at least up to a certain circumstance and then after that, so basically the level, typically, is \$5,000 worth of wages. After that, common law would kick in. There are very specific damages remedies that are set out in common law particularly where, you know, you, in an egregious way dismiss somebody for something that you shouldn't have dismissed them for.

As I said, the difficulty when you get into that situation is more around access to that than it is, you know, what the law says about it. In other words, if you were the gas station attendant that we were just talking about. You get dismissed, you might be entitled to

say, \$1,000 in wages. You're not going to go out and hire a lawyer to pursue that \$1,000 in wages because it's going to cost you \$5,000 to get the lawyer to get you your 1,000 back.

You know, I guess, I'm back to – I don't disagree, but I think there, maybe, needs to be a larger conversation with the employment standards officers to figure out what practically are we into here in terms of enabling. Like, if you're going to have legislation like this, you have to enable it, as well and ensure that they would be onboard to have a mechanism to allow that to happen.

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** In terms of the employment standards, we did send a discussion paper out. We did make an attempt to open a conversation with them around how the act could be implemented.

I'm not entirely sure I'm following, in terms of, in what prohibited behaviours. Under the *Human Rights Act* there is a list of prohibited behaviour, prohibited reasons for dismissal. Within the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* there are prohibitions around disciplining an employee for making reports on that act, and the *Employment Standards Act*.

Again, I'm not a labour lawyer, but we hear stories all the time from people saying, you know, that they've made a complaint and were just terminated with two-weeks notice and told to hit the bricks. Perhaps, there are other remedies, which would require hiring a lawyer and going to court, but we feel that this would be simpler and more direct remedy than using the other civil process.

**Chair:** The hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

**Mr. J. Brown:** I'll give you an –

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

**Mr. J. Brown:** – example –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** Yeah.

**Mr. J. Brown:** – in hopes that it'll explain it.

Just as you just mentioned. If you were discriminated against on the basis of one of the enumerated grounds in our human rights legislation, you'd go down to the Human Rights Commission and you'd file a complaint. That complaint would then be reviewed. It would be determined on a prima facie basis whether there's merit to that complaint or not. If there is found to be merit there's an investigation done. At that point in time, the complainant has made their submission.

The party complained against has the opportunity to respond to it. Then, there's a further opportunities for the parties to submit, you know, basically the facts and argument that they would have relating to it. At that point in time, it would be determined whether or not the matter would go forward to a hearing.

I guess what I'm saying is there are mechanisms in our *Employment Standards Act* to allow for some of that kind of thing, and again, I did not specialize in this area of the law, but what I'm wondering is if you have spoken with them. I would be surprised if the way the employment standards legislation is set-up right now there is provision for that kind of a process to take place. Or, at least, I'm not aware of it. I'm not saying it doesn't exist, but I think we would want to know that before we put the legislation in place that would, kind of, require it.

I guess I'm asking the question: Have you had conversation –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** Yes.

**Mr. J. Brown:** – and the answer is yes, then great –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** Yeah. We didn't have –

**Mr. J. Brown:** – if you haven't then –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** – the conversation directly with the director of labour relations. When we were drafting the bill with Legislative Counsel, it was brought in, in an area of the bill, which deals with processes around making complaints for violations of the act. Clearly, that process is there.

**Mr. J. Brown:** Sorry, you said you did or you did not have the conversation?

**Ms. Biggar:** (Indistinct) did not.

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** We didn't speak to the director of labour relations, but when we were drafting it that there was a process within the act itself to, if you have a complaint against a violation of the act it would be treated the same as that because it becomes a violation of the act once it's prohibited to discriminate against people based on providing information to lawful authorities.

**Chair:** Are you still going, minister?

**Mr. J. Brown:** Yeah, I'm just curious as to what the process would then be. If I'm dismissed for, you know, I'm dismissed and I want to make the allegation I'm dismissed because I'm a whistleblower, what then happens to –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** It would follow the same process as if you had any other complaint. Whether you had a complaint that your wages weren't paid by your employer, whether you had a complaint that your employer denied you of legislated leave, didn't pay you time-and-a-half on a holiday, if you have a complaint that your employer dismissed you because you complained about not being paid for your holiday. There's, I think, a fairly robust mechanism within the employment standards regime we have in order to address these complaints. This would just be an additional type of behaviour, which is prohibited, and therefore would be subject to complaint.

**Mr. J. Brown:** I'm curious as to what that is, though, and where the burdens lie in setting it out and that kind of thing.

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** My understanding is that you go first to the employment advisor. I think it's Shawn Shea, and explain what happened and then they can provide you with guidance on whether or not it falls under the act. Then, often these things are tried, my understanding is they try to resolve them informally. But then, there are, mechanisms, I believe, to have hearings in front of the Employment Standards Board, at which

point they would determine how the issue should be resolved.

**Mr. J. Brown:** Okay, so, I guess what I'm wondering though, and I'm not trying to be difficult here.

There would be a very technical process that you'd go through and sections in the legislation that would say: You're pursuant to whatever section, alleging that you have been dismissed and you've been discriminated against because you're a whistleblower. That would trigger a requirement then for, I'm guessing, for somebody to review that complaint, do an investigation, determine whether there was merit and report back.

Through that, the employer must have some ability or recourse to put their two cents in and there would be a standard, upon which they would be either held to, or there would be a presumption one way or another as to whether or not they would have met that standard, some point throughout that legislation.

That's a fairly, kind of, technical question I appreciate, but I think it's an important piece that we would need to know if we're going to put this in place that that's there in the legislation to go along with it.

**Chair:** Minister, could I – excuse me for a moment. Minister, could we kind of move on and come back to you?

**Mr. J. Brown:** Sure, yeah, sure.

**Chair:** Here's where we're at: we have the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning next, we have the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, if he returns –

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

**Chair:** – and we have the minister of transportation, and we've got the Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

We'll go to the hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know there are some other people who want to speak, but in the process and your

intent of this bill, I can certainly understand it. I would like to recommend that, maybe, after some discussion here we take this to a committee of the whole – to the appropriate committee and hear from some of these stakeholders that we've mentioned earlier.

Could we agree to that?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** To a standing committee?

**Mr. Gallant:** Bring it to the appropriate standing committee.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I feel that this was a well-researched piece of work. I think it's a solid piece of legislation crafted on a template from an existing jurisdiction, where they have such an act in place.

We sent a discussion paper to yourself, minister and other ministers in government and their deputies for feedback.

I really feel that if you had any concerns about this piece of legislation, you had ample time to bring them forward to us and did not. I would have hoped that would have happened before we reached the floor here.

I would rather, if government is not prepared to stand up for all of the workers on PEI, I would rather –

**Mr. Gallant:** Mr. Speaker –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – I would rather send it to a standing committee to vote on it here.

**Chair:** Go ahead, continue, minister.

**Mr. Gallant:** Just to your comments. It's not that we're not willing to stand up to the workers on PEI, it's to take it to that step further to get some more dialogue and consideration to your bill, hon. member. By working together we'd bring it to that committee.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Minister, we, with all due respect, we did send it out to several unions who supported the bill. I feel that sufficient consultation has been done here, both internally and outside of government. I really feel that this is a solid piece of work.

If I look at, to digress slightly, Chair, if I

look at the title of the throne speech, it's: working together. If this is not, not an example of working together, in the introduction of the throne speech it says speaking to MLAs: I encourage you to work together for the best outcomes for our province.

I really feel that, in drafting this legislation, sending around an invitation for input, both internally and externally, that we are trying hard to work together and I feel that we have done that. We have met that expectation. If there were problems that we should have been notified prior to this is my opinion on that.

**Chair:** Okay, we'll go to –

**Mr. J. Brown:** Did we get, sorry, we got an email (Indistinct)

**Chair:** Excuse me.

**Mr. J. Brown:** (Indistinct) before that.

**Chair:** Excuse me. I've got the hon. Member from Rustico-Emerald, you have the floor.

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

I did want to commend the Leader of the Third Party for brining this bill to the floor to amend the *Employment Standards Act*.

I know there is legislation in place that deals with public whistleblowers. I know when I was out talking to Islanders this summer, many, many times I approached people and they said they weren't comfortable with, for example, buying a membership in a political party because they're afraid of how it would impact their job, especially if they were government employees.

I mean – this was really disturbing. This is something, I don't, in many cases it could have been an excuse, that they just didn't really want to buy a membership, but, you know, let's face it, but –

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

**Leader of the Opposition:** It worked for me.

**Mr. Trivers:** Yeah, I knew if I didn't get them, I knew James would.

**An Hon. Member:** He had no tenders to give out.

**Mr. Trivers:** There were definitely genuine concerns.

I was wondering would this act apply in those cases, or that would be more the public whistleblower legislation?

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** If we're talking about civil servants, then that would fall under the public whistleblowers act. No, this legislation would not be applicable in that case.

**Mr. Trivers:** One more.

**Chair:** One more, go ahead.

**Mr. Trivers:** If they were working for a private business or individual or partnership, would this act apply to them then when it came to purchasing a political membership?

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** It would not apply, this act wouldn't, but it would be a violation under the *Human Rights Act* that you're not allowed to discriminate based on political affiliation.

**Ms. Biggar:** Remember those 800?

**Mr. Trivers:** That's all, thanks.

**Chair:** The minister of transportation, then the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot and the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

Just a couple of questions. This, you said, is in two other jurisdictions? So did you just adopt it from that or did you have discussions with the other jurisdictions?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** We did not discuss it with the other jurisdictions, but we did a jurisdictional scan of all provinces, came up with these two provinces where there is private whistleblower protection.

Chose the one that we felt offered the best protections, amended it slightly, sent that out for discussion. Got the feedback from Erin McGrath-Gaudet, amended it a little bit more based on her input and ended up with the bill that we currently have in front of us.

**Ms. Biggar:** Couple of more.

**Chair:** Go ahead minister.

**Ms. Biggar:** In regard to your discussions with different people did you have discussions with the chambers of commerce and the Tourism Association of PEI?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Yes. We had sent it to three chambers of commerce; Charlottetown, greater Summerside, and Kensington and area chamber of commerce.

**Ms. Biggar:** And they responded?

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I don't believe they did, actually.

I took that to be that they had hearty endorsement of what we were doing. If they'd had problems, I assumed they would have got back to us.

**Ms. Biggar:** I still have some concerns that I think we should have some – and I think it would be good to have further discussion on this, really. To see just what the impact would, and who else may have some input in it. That's my only concern about it, and suggesting, you know, I liked the minister's suggestion that we take it to a standing committee and if you didn't get response back from certain people, then the committee can call them to committee and have that input required.

I have a bit of concern as an MLA. I know you sent it to one but I don't recall ever getting an email, myself, discussing that this was coming to the Legislature. That's my concern as a private member, not being able to support it because I would like to have more information.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** May I just respond to this –

**Chair:** Yes –

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** – here for a second?

**Chair:** – respond.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Indeed, we sent it to the, what we felt was the most appropriate department, which was workforce and advanced learning, which is the department under which this legislation would fall.

In terms of sending the bill to a standing committee, it's been my experience as a private member, is that when bills get sent to standing committee to die; they go there and often the interest is not so much in learning more about them, it's about getting them out of the way and letting them disappear. I have certainly had experience with that personally.

Again, if I felt that there was some major flaws with the bill before us, or if we hadn't researched it properly or sought sufficient input, then, absolutely, I just, personally, do not feel that that's the situation.

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

**Mr. Palmer:** Thank you.

Can you give me any background information or the evidence of how often this happens in your jurisdictional scan. What did you find out about what the, kind of, occurrence of this could potentially be right now.

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** Our research has shown that actual complaints under this legislation are fairly rare, whether it has a deterrent effect because employers are aware that that's a prohibited behaviour, or whether, even with whistleblower protections, employees are afraid to come forward and make complaints. But either way, it tends not to, yeah, result.

Even looking at the policy that the provincial government had with whistleblowing to the ethics and integrity commissioner, I think in her first report she didn't have a single complaint that she needed to investigate. So one would hope that just having the legislation in place is enough to have an impact on people's behaviours.

**Mr. Palmer:** Would there – Chair?

**Chair:** Hon. member.

**Mr. Palmer:** Would there be any records or any data with maybe the human rights commission of folks that are going there and trying to make a complaint to it? Or I guess since it doesn't fall under their jurisdiction they wouldn't necessarily keep stats on that, but have you had any conversation with those?

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** We've not had any conversations with the human rights commission. I suspect that information would be easily found in their annual reports if that's something you think is valuable and we could bring back.

**Mr. Palmer:** So you think they could potentially have some data based on things that your bill would be able to –

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** No, no.

**Mr. Palmer:** – protect?

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** It would be against – it would be relative to the prohibited basis of discrimination under the *Human Rights Act* because they wouldn't have any authority to respond to a complaint based on whistleblowing.

**An Hon. Member:** Right.

**Joanne MacKinnon Assistant:** It's not –

**An Hon. Member:** Call the hour.

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Mr. Chair, I move that the Speaker take the chair, and the Chair report progress and beg leave to sit again.

**Chair:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of a Committee of the Whole House, having under consideration a bill to be intitled *An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act*, I beg leave to report that the committee has made some progress and begs leave to sit again. I move that the report of the committee be adopted.

**Deputy Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

Hon. Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning.

**Mr. Gallant:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the hon. Member from O'Leary-Inverness, that this House adjourn until tomorrow, November 29th at 2:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Shall it carry? Carried.

The Legislature adjourned until Wednesday, November 29th at 2:00 p.m.