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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND ORAL QUESTION PERIOD  
(PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS)

FOR

WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2017



Responses to Questions Taken as Notice

Questions by Members

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

**Status of independent office for child advocate**

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

This past Monday, as we are all aware, was National Child Day, a day to highlight the diverse and unique needs of children in our great country.

My first question is to the Premier: Premier, what is the status of establishing an independent office of child advocate here on the Island?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, as had been said in earlier sittings of this House, our commitment is to protecting vulnerable children and our commitment is to acting first on frontline services that will ensure that vulnerable children in risky situations are looked after, and we have in sessions of this House put in place a children's lawyer that's on the job, a parenting coordinator who's getting into the role, and a bridge program, all of which – and there are others, that I'll be happy to speak about in further responses, are effective, and they're working and working together, and they are looking out for children.

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.

Clearly, the Premier and I see the issue differently. An independent office of child advocate would not take away from the work currently being done to protect Island

children. In fact, it would add to those protections for our children.

So again, to the Premier: What would be the harm in adding more independent protection for the welfare of Island children?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we are coming at this in terms of the good that can be done for children. In addition to the measures that I mentioned, there is a supervised access and drop-off sites that have been put in place in 12 different locations throughout the province to be in the aid of families that are in, let me say, family breakdown, or where there are differences that are better dealt with by keeping the child in that supervised access.

I'm proud to say that recently, the bridge program, which has dealt with 80 cases and to the benefit of 155 individuals, was nominated for a national award for public administration and innovation.

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.

If you took the time to listen to Islanders, in particular, in District 11, you would know that this is still a very serious issue that people are talking about.

Over the last year this Premier has launched court challenges of rulings by independent oversight offices, like the Human Rights Commission, like the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

**Need for Child Advocate office**

Question to the Premier: Is your distaste for independent oversight the reason why you resist the repeated calls for a child advocate office?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the process of judicial review is very much a part of the whole principle of the rule of law and, indeed, the fact that we have a Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island where I noted, I was there to the swearing in of a new Chief Justice this morning.

The hon. member opposite raises the process by which the Human Rights Commission's decision was taken to the courts under judicial review, but he didn't mention that the courts actually held in favour of the government and its position in taking a judicial review, and that's why we have a rule of law, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

Establishing a child advocate was a key recommendation of a coroner's inquest by the jurors into the tragic death of a child.

Question to the Premier: The jurors who heard the evidence in that inquest reached the conclusion that we need a child advocate. Why do you think the jurors were wrong?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, the jury did, indeed, speak to a child advocate and they made a reference to measures that would achieve that result for protection of the children.

I'm very proud and our government is very proud of the measures that we brought forward in this most recent session, of in the spring, and in earlier sessions of this Legislature to put in place measures and coordinated and integrated measures that will, indeed, and have, indeed, been able to protect and deal with, and provide service to vulnerable children and families.

Let me mention, also, that in the most recent session we approved alternative dispute resolution, for family matters, and I'm proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

If the Premier agreed with the jurors he would (Indistinct) – and their recommendation for a child advocate.

Again, question to the Premier: Will the Premier listen to the calls for action and commit today to a timetable for establishing an independent child advocate for Island children and youth?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, what we have said from the beginning is that this is about frontline services, it's about protecting vulnerable children and particularly, children at risk. The very first thing that we put in place and it has been recognized for its innovation, it's the only one of its type east of the Saskatchewan, is the bridge program. There are many people including community organizations, police forces, educators, child protection personnel, justice people, health people, who have not worked together in this way before, and they have brought the benefit of their work. They're meeting twice a week. They have brought the benefit of their work to 155 individuals and we're proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

This House unanimously passed Motion No. 83 calling for this government to partner with the federal government to establish a universal basic income pilot project for our province.

The Minister of Family and Human Services wrote a letter to the federal minister seeking support for this program, but he said no. Apparently, she has given up.

### **Universal basic income project for PEI**

Question for the Minister of Family and Human Services: Why have you given up on a federally funded universal basic income project for Prince Edward Island?

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

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

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

Government believes that every Islander deserves the opportunity for a rewarding and fulfilling life. We are committed, as government, to provide programs and services to help them do just that.

I think I have been on my feet for the last three days in a row and I've been outlining all of the work –

**Mr. Trivers:** Lots of talk.

**Ms. Mundy:** – that this government is doing –

**Mr. Trivers:** Lots of talk.

**Ms. Mundy:** – to provide programs and services to help Islanders meet their day-to-day needs. Examples, such as the transformation of the Child Care Subsidy Program; the implementation of a grandparents and caregivers program, all of these are programs that are designed to help Islanders meet the needs, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to poverty reduction, this Liberal government

really likes to talk. Once again, when it comes to a universal basic income pilot, we are seeing no action.

The opposition asked the Premier to get a representative from PEI to sit as an official observer monitoring the Ontario universal basic income pilot. This Premier indicated that the Ontario premier's office was contacted and the request was refused.

This Premier and the Minister of Family and Human Services, apparently, they gave up again.

### **Team monitoring Ontario's income pilot**

Question to the Premier: Premier, have you met directly with your friend, Ontario Premier Wynne, to request that PEI get a spot on the research team monitoring Ontario's basic income pilot?

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

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

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

We are well aware of the Ontario project. I think it was in the House last session that I got up and told the hon. member across the floor the details about the Ontario project. We are keeping a close eye, and I am in contact with my colleagues in Ontario. We're also aware of the project that was going on across the Island this summer; the Working Group for a Livable Income. We are in contact with them, as well. We are receiving input and information back on a basic income guarantee project for Prince Edward Island.

However, we have said from the get-go that we are interested in our own poverty reduction strategy and we announced some details of that just in the House last night.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, this government is sitting back; they're not taking action.

They're not pursuing a universal basic income as mandated by this House. This government needs to take action to make real progress in fighting poverty in this province: enough talking already.

A universal basic income pilot presents such an opportunity for action. The Minister of Family and Human Services may have given up on carrying out action to meet the will of Islanders, but surely with the Premier's close ties to the federal government he must be making progress.

### **Universal basic income project for PEI (further)**

Question to the Premier: Premier, will you outline to the House the details of your conversation with the Prime Minister when you were seeking support for a universal basic income pilot project for PEI?

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

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

**Ms. Mundy:** Mr. Speaker, I'm actually very happy that we're having this debate here today because there is a raging debate amongst poverty advocates as to what is right.

We've got side A that says: it's a universal basic income guarantee, or the system is broken. There is another side that says: we just need to give more aid. But you know what: neither side is listening to one another, and neither side are listening to the people that are in poverty.

Over here we say maybe there's a plan C and that plan C is our poverty reduction strategy and that is engaging with a poverty reduction –

**Mr. LaVie:** No plan.

**Ms. Mundy:** – advisory committee who is going to go out there and they're going to talk to people about what they need –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – that's what we're doing over here. That's action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Trivers:** Mr. Speaker, this is about respect for democracy. This is about the people of PEI speaking through their elected representatives by putting a motion on the floor that was unanimously approved by this House. This is about the Liberal government not listening to the people's will.

**Mr. LaVie:** No plan.

### **Prime Minister and basic income pilot**

**Mr. Trivers:** The Prime Minister is visiting PEI tomorrow to deliver the Symons Lecture.

Question to the Premier: Premier, will you commit to personally lobbying the Prime Minister for funding the PEI universal basic pilot during the Prime Minister's visit tomorrow?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I have an opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister occasionally. There are other ministers who are responsible and indeed Minister Duclos has been approached about this. The response, as we all know, was in the public media, is that the federal government would help with information or data. It seemed like that was the limit. What we are doing as a government, as the Minister of Family and Human Services has been spelling out in considerable detail, is what we're doing for Prince Edward Islanders in this province in collaboration with community partners and we are taking action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Lack of affordable housing**

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

Last evening we debated an opposition motion about the lack of affordable housing options on Prince Edward Island. I was disappointed that the government focused on quibbling over how big the waitlists are, rather than on the people who have been languishing on those waitlists for months and years.

**Mr. LaVie:** Shame.

**Ms. Compton:** Question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: Do you now regret playing politics with our Motion, rather than dealing with the very real issues of affordable housing facing too many Islanders?

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

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

**Ms. Mundy:** Mr. Speaker, again, and I've stated in the House numerous times that we do believe that affordable, appropriate housing is one of the most important social infrastructures on Prince Edward Island. We have made considerable, considerable investments. Again, I was on my feet for three days in a row, listing out those housing investments that we made. \$400,000 –

**Mr. LaVie:** You still haven't got a plan.

**Ms. Mundy:** – contribution to our home renovation programs to keep people in their homes. \$7.2 million that, yes, we have already started to spend on upgrading and improving seniors' homes across Prince Edward Island.

So, we are committed over here to spending the money and we are committed over here to improving the lives of others, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

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

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

This spring a legislative standing committee heard from your department about the urgent

need for affordable options, especially in Charlottetown. Last night during debate, the Premier talked about Airbnb, housing stats, and micro apartments – none of which have anything to do with affordable housing.

Question to the Minister of Family and Human Services: Why won't you and your government focus on the real issue, the lack of affordable housing for vulnerable Islanders?

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

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

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

As I mentioned at the House last week, on October 13<sup>th</sup>, we brought a group of 40 people who are passionate about housing on Prince Edward Island – people who have intimate knowledge of housing needs on Prince Edward Island – and we brought them together to begin to discuss how we can address the housing needs of Islanders.

That was just the beginning –

**Mr. Trivers:** You've had 10 years.

**Ms. Mundy:** – of a bigger, broader strategy. We're going to now put them together with our housing supply task force –

**Mr. Trivers:** Keep talking.

**Ms. Mundy:** – and we are going to deliver a provincial housing strategy that is going to meet the needs of those Islanders that you are speaking about.

**Mr. LaVie:** When?

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

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

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

Back in May, I attended a federal-provincial housing announcement. In fact, it was in Park Royal Court in District 11. That day you committed to have 50 new seniors' housing units in place by the end of the year.

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh! Now we're hearing it.

**Ms. Compton:** It's November 22<sup>nd</sup>, there haven't been any tenders; there haven't been any shovels in the ground for new seniors' housing –

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh.

**Ms. Compton:** – certainly no seniors' housing in District 11.

**Mr. LaVie:** There's the truth.

**Government commitment to 50 new seniors' housing units**

**Ms. Compton:** Minister: Why didn't you follow through on your commitment?

**Mr. LaVie:** No plan.

**An Hon. Member:** You said it.

**Mr. LaVie:** No plan.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct)

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

And actually, yes, it was Park Royal Court – and actually, yes, there was a great deal of seniors there that day and they were all very happy because not only did I announce the \$7.2 million that would go –

**Mr. LaVie:** Minister of Finance (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** – towards victims of family violence, children that are transition out of care, they would also go towards upgrades to seniors' apartments that some of them were living in. \$5.2 million of that would go towards seniors' housing where the need was most. I did not commit to building 50 new units by the end of the year, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Trivers:** Not what you said in the paper.

**Ms. Mundy:** I said that we had \$5.2 million committed to building 50 new units where the need was needed most.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

\$5.2 million, that's a lot of money. It would be great to have some action, rather than just talk.

This was the infamous 'good-news announcements only during polling periods' controversy. What's the hold-up here? Just government waiting for a good-news window during a polling period?

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

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

We felt the need – immediate need – would be too helping those seniors that were in their units already and renovating those and to date, almost \$750,000 of that \$1 million that we committed that day has been spent across 32 communities across Prince Edward Island. So, we did take action. We are now unveiling – and we will be rolling out very shortly – and not through any advocating from the opposition side, but from members on this side.

**Mr. LaVie:** Oh (Indistinct)

**Ms. Mundy:** The minister of Charlottetown-Lewis Point and the –

**Mr. LaVie:** Look what happened to the last minister.

**Ms. Mundy:** – Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park who are in my ear every day –

**Mr. LaVie:** What happened to the last minister?

**Ms. Mundy:** – saying: we need action. And we are acting, Mr. Speaker. You will see RFPs going out very shortly with details on where the need is.

Thank you.



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

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

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

Well, I feel very disappointed that you're going to pick sides here. We all advocate for every one of our communities and our districts –

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

**Ms. Compton:** – for affordable housing and everything and else.

**Mr. LaVie:** Don't forget it.

**Ms. Compton:** The throne speech we just heard paid lip-service to affordable housing with vague promises of another task force to study the issue. Affordable housing that didn't even warrant a mention in the Capital Budget.

Minister: Do you remember what happened to the last minister who under-delivered for vulnerable Islanders?

**Mr. LaVie:** Yeah.

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

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

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

I would never in a million years get up and discuss my predecessor in the House of the people. It is inappropriate and it is unnecessary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **National Housing Strategy**

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

Later today the federal government will be releasing a national housing strategy. Here

on Prince Edward Island, we're just getting ready to start consulting about the problem

Question to the minister: Why wasn't this work started long ago so that Prince Edward Island would be ready, with a plan, to actually get something done about affordable housing?

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

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

Again, we have been ready and we have been doing a lot of planning, and we have been implementing a lot of programs, and improving a lot of programs that are helping Islanders stay in their homes.

When I talk to Islanders as well, I hear that they want to stay in their home and they want help doing that and we have been doing just that. We've increased the amount to our home renovation programs. We've just unrolled in the Speech From the Throne – announced a seniors' home program that we will be also coming up with in the next couple of days, Mr. Speaker.

There is a lot of action been taking place. We haven't been sitting and waiting for the national housing strategy; we've been working in collaboration with the federal government on the national housing strategy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Trivers:** (Indistinct) universal basic income. That'd be nice.

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

### **Perception of manipulation of District 11 by-election results**

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

Earlier today you spoke about government's apparent leak of its own budget to the Liberal Party. Yesterday during debate, I asked the Minister of Finance to explain why the fibre optic backbone was such a

prominent feature of his Budget address when the project was not even included in the Capital Budget.

A question to the Premier: Given the Speaker's impassioned plea this afternoon for improved – and I quote – ‘dignity and respect for this place’, are you concerned that these issues and similar announcements might create the perception that government is trying to manipulate the results of the District 11 by-election?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we have spoken in this House about broadband speed; about Internet service in previous sittings, and it was included in the throne speech; it was spoken about in the Capital Budget, and this is a project that will be realized for the people of this province in an appropriate time and it's appropriate to let the House know that we're working on it and that we will work on it with an appropriate business model that will be affordable to users and to taxpayers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

In his response to the throne speech last week, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries said this of the opposition: “I know you critique us on certain days and that's absolutely fantastic.”

However, since the throne speech was introduced over a week ago, only members of the government side have had the opportunity to respond.

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

### **Recall of Motion No. 1 for debate before by-election**

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** Some might interpret this as an attempt by government to avoid

legitimate critique and muzzle the voices of opposition members during a by-election.

A question to the Premier: Will you recall Motion 1 for debate before the by-election on Monday?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, I thought when we –

**Mr. Fox:** He's giving it to you.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** – when we called the Capital Budget estimates for discussion that the opposition would appreciate the opportunity to dig into the issues, and indeed that seemed to take place yesterday, and I think it's appropriate for the people to know what we're doing with their investments, with their resources, with our priorities, and yes, we will, recall the reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Dr. Bevan-Baker:** I was very specific about before Monday. I didn't hear that in the answer.

During the writ period of a general election, there are strict rules preventing government from making public announcements advertising or using their power and access to public funds to manipulate the results.

### **Implementation of blackout periods during by-elections**

In light of the concerns expressed about government actions over the past couple of weeks, I think we should consider implementing a similar blackout period during by-elections.

A question to the Premier: The Special Committee on Democratic Renewal could easily undertake this sort of work. Will you commit to referring this issue to the committee?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, a by-election is, of course, different from a general election. The affairs of the province must go on. The meeting of this Assembly was scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> of November. It was indicated well in advance that there would be a throne speech. It's the custom of this House that there's a Capital Budget that's presented early in that session, and we are going forward with the needs of the people, with the opportunities to move this province forward. What we said in our throne speech, people, prosperity, progress – that's what we're here for, and I believe that's what they'll vote on, on Monday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. R. Brown:** No, not me.

**Mr. MacKay:** Don't blame you throwing the towel in.

**Leader of the Opposition:** Can I have his?

**An Hon. Member:** I'll take it.

**Speaker:** Hon. member, your name is on the list.

**Mr. R. Brown:** Oh, it is. I could use a question then, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Status of tender for replacement of Northumberland Ferry**

I've got a question for the minister of economic development: During last June or July, the hon. Lawrence MacAulay announced that there would be a tender coming out for the replacement or – the replacement of the Northumberland Ferry. What is the status of that tender?

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

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

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. There was a committee formed, obviously, at the request of the province, and then we moved forward and shortly thereafter, Mr. MacAulay, the federal MP, made the announcement about the ferry, and the tender is in process as far as we know. We can consult with Mr. MacAulay again and ensure that the process is expedited as quickly as possible –

**Mr. LaVie:** (Indistinct) the answer either.

**Mr. MacDonald:** We've had a tremendous year in eastern Prince Edward Island as far as tourism goes, and that ferry is very important to us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** Hon. member, do you have a supplementary?

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

**Mr. LaVie:** You've got him on the ropes.

**Mr. Myers:** Got him on the ropes.

**Mr. LaVie:** Give it to him.

**Mr. R. Brown:** I'm not on no ropes.

**Mr. LaVie:** He dodged (Indistinct)

**Speaker:** Okay, then we'll go to the hon. Member from Summerside-Wilmot.

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

**Mr. LaVie:** He dodged a bullet.

**Mr. Palmer:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. As I pass by an unharvested carrot field as I walked the Confederation Trail in Summerside these past few weeks, I see opportunity.

#### **Harvesting of food for food banks**

Gleaning, or collecting unharvested produce from farmers' fields after the commercial harvest, is complete is an age-old activity. In this age of plenty, where the world produces one-and-a-half times the food needed to feed

everyone, there are still very high demands on food banks.

Minister, are there any incentives for farmers to work with volunteers to harvest food for food banks?

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

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

Gleaning is an age-old practice. I think it dates right back to the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament, where Ruth was gleaning behind the harvesters for Boaz. In that case, Boaz actually left a little extra behind.

Today, on Canada's Food Island, we do harvest the fields and there are opportunities for people to go in and harvest some of the things that are left after the machines have gone through.

There is an incentive, as well, for farmers who want to donate food to a registered charity, that they can receive a tax receipt from that registered charity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Minister, what more can be done to encourage the harvesting of these crops here on Canada's Food Island so next season we will not see any of these unharvested fields?

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

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

We also have a program in place, the local food in schools; I announced that a little bit earlier. The tax incentives are some things as well. We do not want or plan the farmers to leave any product behind, but in some cases they do, and in some cases the farmers will allow people to go in and actually glean

behind the harvesters, pick up extra carrots, turnips, whatever it might be, for their own use.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker

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

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

**Data collected from unharvested fields**

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

Minister, what data do you collect concerning unharvested fields so we can better understand the opportunity to collect food from these fields?

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

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

We don't actually collect data on what product is left in the fields, but we have the incentives for the farmers to provide that food to the public and allow people to come onto the farms. I would stress, though, that I would ask the people who do want to go gleaning behind a harvester, whatever, that they ask for permission. Even Ruth asked Boaz (Indistinct) harvesters if she could go into that field.

So, we would ask you first and foremost to ask the farmers. I'm sure they would be more than happy, in most cases, to allow them to go there. And again, encourage the farmers that there is a tax receipt available if they want to donate to the registered charity or donate to our local farm in schools project, which we'll be expanding down the road.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

In the thought of working together, perhaps I'll ask a supplementary question for the Member from Charlottetown-Victoria Park.

The minister of economic development stated that we're in an RFP. We're actually not in an RFP for the ferry. We're actually in the middle of an RFI, and that's due in mid-December.

### **Federal government interest in RFI**

Can the minister tell us if the federal government has had much uptake or any interest in that RFI?

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Premier MacLauchlan:** Mr. Speaker, we had meetings in Ottawa about 10 days ago, and one of those meetings was with the Minister of Transport, the hon. Marc Garneau. We, in the course of that meeting, made it known that we are interested in how that process is proceeding, that the province would appreciate an opportunity when it's timely to do so, to have some – I'll say – some advice and an opportunity to respond or to comment.

The department of transportation is not yet at a point where we've had that consultation.

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

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

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

Thankfully, there appears to be a shift underway in society towards how issues of sexual violence are viewed. A greater emphasis is finally being placed on addressing these issues in our communities, our workplaces, and our public institutions.

### **Guidelines for sexual violence policies**

A question for the Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning: What guidelines are currently in place for sexual violence policies in Island postsecondary institutions?

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

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

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

Thank you very much for the question. At this point, we met with the student union at UPEI and we've talked to Holland College, and it is a concern of theirs. There is some initial conversations going on, but at this point there isn't any action, but there is something going forward into the future. As I said, there's conversations going on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Oversight of sexual violence at post-secondary institutions**

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

Most provinces have guidelines in place requiring post-secondary institutions to have consistent standards for sexual violence policies.

Question again to the minister: When will PEI enact legislation to provide external oversight of sexual violence policies at post-secondary institutions?

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

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

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

There are some wonderful things going on out at UPEI and with the Student Union. As I had indicated, there are some primary discussions and we're not at a point yet where we can implement legislation, but we're dealing with it and we'll be dealing with it into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Timeline for legislation dealing with sexual violence**

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

It seems to be a theme of this government to say: Into the future. No specific timelines.

Can you give us an actual timeline of when your department will have this work completed and implemented?

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

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

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

Thank you, again, hon. member, for the question.

As I indicated, there is some dialogue happening on this and as we go forward, we'll certainly keep you informed of any progress on it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

**Division responsible for sexual violence legislation**

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

Has the minister named an actual lead? Who's the lead in your department that's working on this file?

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

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

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

This comes under the labour department and the employment standards and things like that. It's a collaborative effort, as I've said, so it's in primary discussions at this time and as more becomes into this, we'll share it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Education and prevention programming**

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

We know that how we react is important, but also, we must understand how important prevention is when it comes to sexual assaults.

Minister: Will your legislation go even further and include things like education and prevention programming?

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

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

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

As I had indicated, the Student Union are a very bright and talented bunch of individuals. I'm sure when this is all worked out there'll be a lot of things taken into consideration and this is a very important issue. I'm sure it'll be done right whenever the legislation comes into place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Collaboration between departments on sexual violence legislation**

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

I agree with the minister; they are very bright, so let's not let them down. Let's put a lead on this file right away rather than just talking about it. Victims of sexual violence not only suffer physical trauma, but also emotional trauma. Left unaddressed, this can manifest itself in ways that affect a person's mental health.

Question again to the minister: Has he reached out to the health minister on this

file, and what are you doing together to act on this issue?

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

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

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

These comments by the hon. member are very important to this government, and all of the departments have been touched on this and I'm sure if he wants to know what the minister of health is doing on it, he should ask the minister of health. But, we've all discussed this. This has been a topic of importance and it's being discussed. As I said, there isn't any solid legislation to lay out yet, but we're certainly working on it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

### **Mental health funding for post-secondary intuitions**

**Mr. MacEwen:** That's a great suggestion, Mr. Speaker, I'll take the minister up on that offer.

We know that the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will often need mental health services to deal with their situations, regardless of whether or not they've actually spoken publicly or reported the sexual assault.

Has the minister of health given thought to direct mental health funding for our post-secondary institutions?

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

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, once again, mental health is one of our higher priorities within our department and we have done a number of things and one of those issues is regarding having walk-in clinics. At any point in time on Prince Edward Island there's going to be a walk-in clinic open for

any individual who is suffering mental health issues, whether that's anguish and whatever the particular cause would be from.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Obviously you didn't hear me. Has the minister of health given any thought to direct mental health funding for our post-secondary institutions?

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

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, our first priority in dealing with mental health issues is within the school system. We've added some mental health school nurses in both Westisle and Montague. As we get that across the Island we'll look at other post-secondary institutions or secondary institutions from that point on.

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

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

### **Per-student funding model for mental health initiatives**

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

I'm still not getting an answer. It seems to me that this should definitely be a target demographic for a mental health and addictions strategy.

The UPEI Student Union has asked you to invest in a per-student funding model dedicated to supporting post-secondary student mental health and wellness initiatives. Are you going to, minister?

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

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, we have a number of services that we provide for any individual out there on Prince Edward Island who has mental health issues. They're certainly welcome to take them to our walk-in clinics. They can present themselves to an emergency room and we'll provide them with the appropriate mental health services at that point.

We're always looking to add on to that, but I want to try to make sure that we can get these services and we're able to deliver those services in a safe and effective manner, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

We've obviously heard countless stories of concern over the past number of years. I'm wondering if the minister is even going to consider this idea.

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

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, we have a plan that we're moving forward with on our mental health and addictions strategy. As we keep rolling that strategy out we'll be continuing to provide more and more services to all groups on Prince Edward Island, whether that be post-secondary students, whether that's secondary students, whether that's individual seniors and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Speaker:** The hon. Member from Morell-Mermaid, your final question.

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

This is a target demographic for our mental health problems. I believe both the Alberta and Ontario governments have gone down the road of direct investment. I'm curious to know why the minister just won't say 'yes' or 'no.' If he is considering it say 'yes.' If

he's not considering it, let's be open and upfront with the students at UPEI.

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

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

**Mr. Henderson:** Mr. Speaker, we're always considering trying to help as many Islanders as we possibly can with any particular service in health care as it pertains to them. We also, as many know, we have some issues that we're trying to deal with regarding our psychiatrists, psychologists. We have to make sure that we have the health care professionals that are able to deliver that.

In the meantime, we have a continuum of care of services that are provided to, at many different locations throughout Prince Edward Island. I encourage any Islander that has a struggle with mental health to avail themselves to the appropriate location.

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

[End of Question Period]